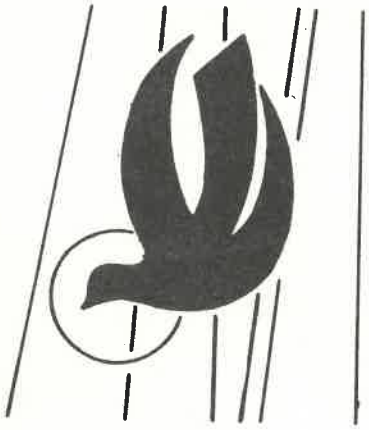
TEAM MANUAL

for the Life in the Spirit Program

A method of introducing people
into the Spirit-filled life

First Edition



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December 7, 1970

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

This team manual was developed by the Word of God Community in Ann Arbor as a result of their experience in ministering to those seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Although it represents the experience of only one community, it contains insights and teaching which have already proven of great value to communities of all types throughout the nation. Its greatest strength, in my opinion, is that its foundation is simply an explicit presentation of the Gospel message of repentance and belief in Jesus Christ. Of special value is the insight that the baptism in the Holy Spirit must be integrated into a total Christian life. The seminar system offers a means by which this process can be initiated. On the basis of our experience at Notre Dame as well as observations around the country, I would like to add several comments: 1.) While developed in a college type community, this program is basically suited to meet the needs of any Christian community. While some modifications may be in order, the essential content of these seminars could hardly be altered without doing serious harm to its purpose of presenting the baptism in the Holy Spirit in the perspective of full Christian life. It is designed to meet the needs and to integrate members into the community. 2.) Its use by other communities may require some adaptations which should only be done with caution. For example, in South Bend all sessions are held before the prayer meeting because of the difficulty of finding another meeting time. Also, it is not so important for some people to emphasize equally every detail as to stress clearly the main points. For example, in talk #3 it is not so important to outline the detailed history of the Holy Spirit in Scripture as to convey the role which the Spirit has played in God's plan. A discussion may work better for those uncomfortable with classroom techniques. 3.) The team is important. It cannot be developed overnight. There is a need for patience and prayer here. 4.) Although a program can be easily packaged, the wealth of experience and compassion, which lead to it, cannot be. What is primary is that those seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit receive the best possible ministry. The program should be approached in faith and prayer, not as a solution to all problems, but a tool which the Spirit can use. 5.) There is a need for ongoing ministry and teaching <u>after</u> the program is completed. This, too, is a responsibility of local communities.

James Byrne

EXPLANATION SESSION
(Preceding the Life in the Spirit Program)

PURPOSE: 1) To share about the Charismatic Renewal and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit
2) To offer a vision of the Spirit-filled Christian life
3) To prepare newcomers for the prayer meeting
4) To acquaint newcomers with the means available to seek a fuller Christian life (i.e. Life in the Spirit Program, literature, contacts with community members)

FORMAT: One fifty-minute session -- 1. Introductory talk (20 minutes)
2. Testimonies (20 minutes)
3. Explanations (15 minutes)

Minimum personnel would be two; three are suggested.

OUTLINE:

1). INTRODUCTORY TALK

I. The Holy Spirit ought to make a difference in Christians' lives.

A. Jesus' promises

1. Last Supper
--the reason for His return to the Father (Jn 16:7)
--the Spirit of Truth (Jn 16:12-13)
--Another Comforter (Jn 14:16-17)

2. Post Resurrection
--"promise of my Father" (Lk 24:49)
--"power from on high" (Lk 24:49)
--"baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:4-5)

B. Experience of the Early Church

1. Pentecost
--promise fulfilled (Acts 2:33)
--the difference (boldness, confidence, empowered, worship, unity, testimony to the Resurrection)
--for everyone (Acts 2:39; also Joel's prophecy, Acts 2:17 ff.)

2. After Pentecost
--Acts records several instances of the Spirit empowering people (Acts 8:14ff.; 10:44ff.; 19:1 ff.)
--Paul presumes an experiential knowledge of the Spirit in several epistles (Gal. 3:1-5; Phil. 2:1)
--the Spirit is a seal or guarantee of God's promises (Rom. 5:1-5; I Cor. 2:22; Eph. 1:13)

C. Teaching of the Church

1. Source of life in Christ (cf. Romans 8)
2. Pronouncements
--Leo XIII: "Divinum Illud"
--Vatican II
--Pope Paul: "The Church's first need is always to live Pentecost."

II. The Spirit can make a difference in Christians' lives today

A. Experience of most Christians today
--Acts 19:1 ff.
--Most "know" about the Holy Spirit
--the Spirit rarely makes a difference

OUTLINE (Cont.)

B. The Charismatic Renewal
--God is touching ordinary people today: gifts and fruits
--increase of faith and expectancy

C. God's Plan
--to renew the Church
--to renew the hearts and lives of Christians

D. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit
--prayer for release of the power of the Spirit in our life
--not a Sacrament
--through faith in Jesus (claim His promise)
--a threshold or breakthrough to a new dimension of the Christian life (for spiritually formed as well as youngsters)

2). Testimonies

3). Explanations:

I. Prayer Meetings

A. We come together to worship Jesus
1. Meeting centered around Christ
2. Means of worship
--tongues ("word of prayer")
--spontaneous prayer
--silence
--singing (etc.)
3. All things "in order" which build up faith in Jesus

B. We come to hear God speak to us
1. Normal means
--Scripture
--sharing (etc.)
2. Charismatic gifts
--prophecy
--inspired teaching, exhortation, etc.
3. Need for openness to His voice

C. Everyone welcome to participate or observe

II. Life in the Spirit Program
--Describe program and rationale
--Announce date of next session (also time and place)
--Assign texts (Jn 14-17)

III. Literature
--Describe bookstand
--Suggest titles: Catholic Pentecostals -- Ranaghan
They Speak with Other Tongues -- Sherrill
The Cross and the Switchblade -- Wilkerson
"Handbook: Threshold of God's Promise"

IV. Encourage contact with community members

Commentary on the Explanation Session

The Explanation Session is a situation designed to serve newcomers to the prayer meeting. From the outset of the Charismatic Renewal, the ministry to newcomers has been important. To provide those attending the prayer meeting for the first time with direct attention and with an opportunity to understand what often appears as an unusual phenomenon is a real work of charity. A sound explanation can free an individual from intellectual obstacles or barriers and enable the Spirit to work in his life more directly. Its essential purpose is to minister to the wide variety of needs found in those initially attracted to the Charismatic Renewal with a view towards stirring them to a deeper longing for God. If these sessions are complemented by a Life in the Spirit Program, it is no longer necessary to feel obliged to tell the newcomer "everything" in one shot. Such an approach, in fact, frequently is confusing. The Explanation Session ought to be directed to the needs and questions of those encountering a charismatic community for the first time. A picture of the power of God at work in the charismatic renewal and the personal release of that power through the baptism in the Holy Spirit should be presented. The pentecostal movement ought to be described in the context of the full Christian life, lived in a full Christian community. A newcomer ought to leave excited by the good things God is doing. Anticipation in God's presence, especially in the prayer meeting, should be awakened. And the newcomer should know how to come into contact with Christ, this community, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

FORMAT

Essentially the outlines for this session contains three types of presentation: an introduction talk, testimonies and explanation. The format is variable given differing needs and personnel. The mechanics of the session are variable. Whether it precedes or follows a prayer meeting depends on a variety of circumstances. An informal, personal atmosphere leaves newcomers at ease. A joke or two also eases tension; especially if it can poke fun at traditional images of "holy rollers" which often are at the back of people's minds. It often relaxes people if the format is explained at the outset so that everyone understands what to expect. If size and time permits, an opportunity for each to identify themself is also valuable. Above all, the session should be characterized by faith and love. A bitter or critical spirit has no place here. In fact, anything which does not move to faith in God and His Promises is out of order. The session should begin by calling to mind the presence of God, and perhaps accompanied by a brief formal prayer such as the Our Father. The team, above all, should approach this session in faith. It will not do to depend upon group reaction. Throughout the session, the victory of the Cross should be claimed for each newcomer. It is important to realize that the content, while significant, does not matter so much as the fruits of the Spirit, such as peace, joy, and compassion which they see in those who represent the community in this session.

1.) The Introductory Talk:

This talk should be given in an informal style designed to place everyone at ease. If this outline is utilized, it ought to be carefully studied. The references to scripture are intended for the speaker and all of them need not be used. Above all, they should be cited in the context of the talk from memory. It makes most Catholics very uncomfortable to hear scripture read at them and many have trouble catching the points being made. It is important that the points be made and that the speaker be familiar enough with scripture to cite Our Lord's or St. Paul's words from which the point is taken.

God intended that the Holy Spirit should make a difference in the lives of His People. This was what Jesus promised. At the Last Supper he told the disciples that it was to their advantage that He leave because He would send the Spirit. For this reason He indicated that His departure should be a source of joy. He also indicated some of the functions of the Spirit— it would teach them the truth which He had taught them, but which they could not understand at that time. The Spirit was described as "another comforter". Jesus, the first comforter, was returning to the Father; the Spirit, however, would be with Christians forever. After the resurrection, He spoke explicitly of the promise of the Father and advised the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for its fulfillment. He spoke of power from on high and made a comparison with John's baptism of water, foretelling the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

These promises were not empty words to Jesus' disciples. Although they had seen the Lord and believed in Him, they were timid and fearful men. Pentecost made a difference to them. They were empowered by the Holy Spirit; they experienced a new boldness which enabled them to witness to the resurrection of Jesus. The Spirit enabled them to live out the new life which Jesus had revealed to them and won for them. At Pentecost, as Peter pointed out, Jesus' promise was fulfilled. And this promise was not limited by time or space but available to everyone. The books of the New Testament make it clear that the early Christian's knowledge of the Holy Spirit was experiential. All the promises Jesus made were not yet fulfilled, but the Spirit, poured into men's hearts was God's guarantee that they would be. This is not a "new" teaching. The Church has consistently taught that the Spirit is the source of the Christian life. The pronouncements of modern popes, the teachings of Vatican II all point to this truth. (Leo XIII, "Divinum Illud"; Paul VI, "The Holy Spirit and the Life of the Church"; Council document "The Church", section 7, pp. 20-22.) It is the Spirit which gives life.

This is true today, as well. But for most Christians, the Holy Spirit is a matter for theologians or a belief to be accepted. Even though they have "heard" of the Holy Spirit, unlike the disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19:1ff), they rarely know Him or His actions in faith. Like the Ephesian Church, they often lack something vital in their Christian life. The Spirit rarely even makes a real difference in their lives; much less is He a source of life and power.

Yet for thousands of Christians and Catholics, He is coming to make a real difference. He is touching lives in deep and meaningful ways. The ways that He is working are clearest if they are illustrated with specific examples from the life of the local community. This outpouring is not sporadic, but a part of God's plan to renew the whole Church.

The prayer for the baptism in the Holy Spirit has been the means for this renewal. It is a prayer which is made in expectation of God's promise of the Holy Spirit. Through such boldness and trust, God has released the power of His Spirit in the lives of thousands. This is not another sacrament. The Church teaches that the Spirit is given at the sacrament of baptism. This is true. But the effects of His presence are frequently dulled by a lack of active faith on the part of the individual. To turn in faith to Jesus and claim the presence and action of the Holy Spirit is a prayer which God is pleased to honor. Rather than showing a lack of humility, it is an act of humility in which we turn to the only source of life and acknowledge our need for Him. It is a prayer which is the threshold of a new dimension in our Christian lives. This is something for everyone-- spiritually old or young. It represents a breakthrough to a new depth of relationship with God.

2.) Testimonies

Testimonies enable newcomers to see the effects of the Spirit's work on a day to day level. Through the testimonies, the points made in the introductory talk can be placed on an immediate and intimate level. The real difference which the Spirit can make, the promise which is for everyone and the baptism of the Spirit become vivid in the shared experiences of community members. Testimonies should be prayerfully considered <u>before</u> they are shared. It is not helpful, or possible, to share everything, but those things which will be relevant to those in the session should be emphasized. It is important to allow the Spirit to guide you in knowing what to emphasize.

A valid format for a testimony would be a description of your life <u>before</u> you prayed for the baptism in the Holy Spirit, <u>how</u> you came to seek it, and the difference it has made in your life. A few well chosen examples say much more to newcomers than statements like, "The Lord has done really great things in my life." For example, if He has enabled you to love and serve others, an example of this would be very helpful. It is important to select two or three points to emphasize. In this, the leading of the Spirit is important. If the group is composed of young people, it will usually be important to emphasize the importance of a personal committment to Jesus Christ and what that means. For older people, the relationship with traditional devotions may be significant.

3.) Explanations

Explanations of the prayer meeting, the Life in the Spirit Program, and available literature are valuable to new people. An explanation of the prayer meeting is especially important if the session precedes it, but is also valuable even if it follows. A prayer meeting is a strange phenomonen for most Catholics. Therefore it is a real service to explain the purpose of a prayer meeting.

Its purpose is worship. Everyone is there because of what God has revealed in Jesus Christ. There are a variety of means of worship. Newcomers will be familiar with some such as silent adoration, spontaneous sprayer (perhaps) and singing. Other forms, such as a word of prayer in tongues and singing in tongues should be explained. A normal explanation will prevent a new person from being "spooked" by these gifts. Newcomers should be encouraged to participate. Everything which builds up faith in Jesus is in order.

The purpose of the prayer meeting is also to hear God's word. The idea of expecting God to speak may be novel to some. An explanation of the "normal" means, such as scripture, speaking,etc., will perhaps give an insight into the ways He works. His use of other means , such as prophecy, inspired preaching, etc. should also be explained. This explanation should serve as an exhortation for all to expect to hear God speak to them.

The Life in the Spirit Program, if offered, should be explained in some detail. The committment which it involves should be clearly outlined and its rationale described. The time and location of the next session should also be announced as well as the assigned readings. (John 14-17) A copy of a handout used at Notre Dame follows.

Since most newcomers are interested in some examination of the Charismatic Renewal, an explanation of available literature is a valuable service. Oftentimes, they will simply pick up any book at a bookstand which mentions "Spirit". Catholic Pentecostals, They Speak with Other Tongues, The Cross and the Switchblade and The Threshold of God's Promise should be mentioned.

(A copy of a handout distributed to those attending explanation sessions at Notre Dame.)

An Invitation to the Life in the Spirit Seminars:

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, "If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, "Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:37-39)

Rejoice! Jesus has been glorified! His Spirit has been given! To all who commit themselves to the Lord and desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit this promise is now extended.

If you desire a fuller Christian life and wish to seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit through the ministry of this community, you are invited to attend the Life in the Spirit Seminars. These seminars will meet once weekly for six consecutive weeks. You will be asked to attend each session. The seminars will prayerfully consider the full life to which God is calling men today and the role of the Holy Spirit in that life. There will be an opportunity during the sessions to pray with members of this community for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Several members of our community will attend these sessions and lead the sharing. The sessions should provide ample opportunity for you to consider the call which God is making to you and to learn how to respond more fully.

The topics of the six sessions are:

1.) Union with God and One Another.
2.) Steps to Union with God.
3.) The Holy Spirit and His gifts.
4.) Praying for the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.
5.) Growth in the Spirit#1.
6.) Growth in the Spirit#2.

The next session of the Life in the Spirit Seminars will begin on_____. The first session will be held at____ in_____. Times and locations of future meetings will be discussed at the first session. If you plan to come to the seminar, please pray and meditate on chapters 14, 15, 16, and 17 of St. John's Gospel before the first meeting. There will be short homework assignments such as this for each meeting. Above all, watch and listen for what God is doing and saying to you. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is His work. We can only watch His hand at work in our lives and praise Him for His goodness.

"For this reason, then, I fall on my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth receives its true name. I ask God, from the wealth of his glory, to give you power through his Spirit to be strong in your inner selves, and that Christ will make his home in your hearts, through faith." (Ephesians 3:14-17)

June, 1970
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Introduction to the Life in the Spirit Program

Over the past two or three years we have been actively engaged in seeking God's will about how to lead people into the Baptism of the Spirit and a deeper Christian life. The Lord has shown us that we cannot consider the B.H.S. apart from the rest of the Christian life. That is to say that we cannot consider the B.H.S. to be an extra, added attraction to the Christian life -- something like a set of Sunday clothes which you bring out on special occasions; but rather that the B.H.S. should be a normal and fully integrated part of our Christian lives and a free gift from our Father who loves us.

When our community first began we had the notion that the sovereign work of the Spirit was the criteria for baptizing people in the Spirit. So what we did was to say that if there was anyone who wished to receive the B.H.S. we would pray with them now in the bedroom or some such place. . So we would take the people into another room and give a brief explanation of the Gift of God and then lay hands on them and pray for the Baptism.

Some time later we began to have the explanation room and the Baptism room as two separate things because we saw a need for a little more careful instruction Still later we came to have three separate rooms; the explanation room, the preparation room (here people received a more in-depth explanation of the Baptism and spiritual gifts and also had a chance to talk personally witha mature member of the community. At this time the person would feel freer to ask questions which he might not ask in the larged group), and the Baptism room.

All of these methods proved inadequate for one reason or another. It wasn't that our notion of the action of the Spirit was wrong (the Spirit is the sovereign worker here and Jesus is the baptizer in the Holy Spirit) but rather that people were having various difficulties saw the B.H.S. as an end in itself. They were looking for an experience and when they "got it" they soon became dissappointed because if didn't live up to the expectations. Other people came to seek the Baptism because they thought it would be a "cure-all" for their problems both physical and emotional. The B.H.S. can be a source for healing for people and we should look upon it as such but it is not ans was not meant to be a cure-all. These people, also, became disillusioned and began to drift away. There were all kinds of other problems which people ran into after the Baptism; what do I do now that I have received the B.H.S.? ; how to yield to the spiritual gifts especially tongues; how to become fully integrated in the community. These are important problems and they have to be dealt with.

The Lord began to show us that the main reason why these problems existed was because people just did not properly understand what it was that the

B.H.S. was and that if these problems were to be dealt with sucessfully we would have to find a better way of leading people to the Baptism. After prayer and consideration we have come up with what seems to be an adequate and Spirit-directed method of leading people into the fuller life of the Spirit and a deeper Christian life. We have been using this method here in Ann Arbor for the past six months with very good results. The method consists of an explanation room and a series of Living the Life of the Spirit meetings. A brief overview follows.

Overview

The explanation room has three main elements in it; 1) personal committment to Christ and what that means, 2) that the Holy Spirit is a gift from God and that we receive the spirit by asking, 3) a personal testimony from a mature member of the community. After people have been to the explanation those wishing to enter the life of the Spirit and become a part of our communtiy are invited to the Living the Life of the Spirit meetings.

The Living the Life of the Spirit meetings consist of six meetings (one, one hour session each week for six weeks). The time factor is fairly important. The one week interlude between the sessions allows the people seeking the Baptism time for prayer and reflection on the previous meeting and the coming meeting. More importantly, it allows time for the people to begin living the sort of life which is presented in the meetings. It is during this time that these people should be drawn together more and more into the life of the community -- its prayer together bible studies, living situations, services it performs, etc.

Three main things are meant to happen during the course of the six meetings: 1) the people in the meetings are drawn together in unity and love for one another and begin to experience being a part of the community; 2) the information which we have about the Baptism of the Spirit and the living of a fuller and deeper Christian life is communicated both through word of mouth and through actions; 3) people are helped to yield to the love of the Lord in a deeper way (especially through the B.H.S.). A number of things are essential if these goals are to be accomplished: a) a team of mature, Spirit-filled Christians (usually 3 or 4) should go through the series of six meetings with the people seeking the Baptism. This is important for a good many reasons. Having a number of community members in the meetings gives the new people a sense of belonging to the community already instead of being a group of outsiders seeking to gain admission. The ratio of new people to "old" people should stay around 3 to 1. Any larger ratio than that and the job of personal contact becomes quite formidable. The role of the community people in the meetings is that they act as leaven and share (without dominating the meeting) and more importantly that they become friends with the new people and that through their friendship, they begin to bring the new people into the life of the community. Making friends is

important. If people don't feel loved and wanted by the community all of your words will fall on deaf ears; b) praying together before and after each of the meetings. Prayer together is what brings us to the source of our unity -- Jesus. The prayers should be short and probably not much more than an Our Father or something at first but as time goes on the people will probably want to make up their own prayers. Be led by the Spirit; c) ask everyone to read and meditate on the Scripture passages for each meeting during the week. The passages are at the top of the outlines. It isn't necessary to have them read every Scripture reference in the outlines. This is to give people an understanding of the role of Scripture in the life of a Christian. That is to say that it is in Scripture that we find the basis for the words which we speak and the actions we perform. It is preferable that the first time the group gets together that you merely decide on a time for meeting suitable for everyone, socialize a little, and assign the Scripture passages for the first meeting. If you wish you might start each meeting with a short (5 min.) time of sharing about the Scripture passages for the week. DON'T GET SIDETRACKED; d) urge people to read the suggested readings. The readings are there because they are useful for exhorting and teaching. "Above all hold unfailing your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins." (I Pet 4:8)

The progression of the meetings themselves incorporates the B.H.S. into the whole Christian life:

I. Union with God and One Another: This meeting introduces the people to the most important and beautiful aspect of our relationship with God. He wants, more than anything else, that we live with him where he is. This is what man was meant for and this is what the Christian desires with all of his heart.

II. Steps to Union With God: In order to be united with the Father and the Son and to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we need to surrender ourselves completely to Jesus Christ.

III. The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is that Gift from God which gives us the power to become the sons of God. It is the Spirit of Jesus which brings about our union with God. The Spirit is for everyone. Practical discussion of gifts.

IV. Praying for the B.H.S.: The beginning of a deeper life and union with God by yielding to his Spirit.

V. Growth in the Spirit: Continuing to seek the Lord's life through such essential means as prayer, study, community, and action. This is a practical discussion of what man does to let God work in him.

VI. Growth #2 (Being Sanctified in the Spirit): We do not bring about our own sanctification. Rather, it is the Spirit at work in us to make us holy.

Praise the Lord! Stay in the Spirit! Do his work joyfully!

I. Union with God and One Another

The purpose of this session is to show that the first and foremost desire of God's heart is that we be united with him and that this unity is attained only through Jesus. The people should pray and meditate on Chapters 14, 15, 16, and 17 of John's Gospel before this meeting.

I. Unity, oneness

a.) God, the source of all creation, has but one desire for us - to live in unity with him. (Jn 17:20-21) One of the meanings of "unity/oneness" is completeness. It is this union with God that makes us whole.

b.) Everything is a help to attain this desire of God's. (i.e. Redemption; B.H.S.)

c.) The main reason Jesus was sent by the Father was to show the way to himself and to give us the means to live in oneness and unity with him. (Again, Redemption; B.H.S.)

d.) All unity and oneness with God comes from God himself. (Jn 14:6)

1. The Spirit gives us the power to become sons of God (Jn 1:12)

II. God calls each of us to union with him

a.) Jesus wants each one of us to desire union with him (Rev 3:20)

b.) Each one of us must commit himself to Jesus. (Jn 14:23)

III. God calls us as a people

a.) God does not want us to live our Christian lives alone, but together with other Christians. (Jn 17:20-26, Eph 4:1-6) It is our union and oneness with one another in Jesus that is the greatest witness of Jesus to the world.

"...that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you have sent me..."

b.) Jesus is the source of our unity and oneness.
- the vine and the branches Jn 15:4)
- the Body of Christ (I Cor 12:12-27)

c.) The early Church is an example of this oneness. (Acts 2:43-47; 4:32-37)
- This then is what Jesus wants for us - that we be one with one another in, with, and through him and the Father.
- Share about your own community.

Suggested Reading: Mere Christianity, C. S. Lewis

#1 Union

In general, the way something is started determines the way in which it will go for the duration. The same is true with these Life of the Spirit meetings. The meetings should be a time of joy and discovery for the people attending them, not a drudgery to be endured. The spirit of the "team" will infect the new people. They are looking to the team for the attitudes which they think they should have. Your attitude is their attitude. As was said above, this time of meeting together should be a time of joy and discovery for the people. They will be living and loving with other Christians, something which they have never experienced before and they will be meeting Jesus in a new, deeper and more personal way. This is what Jesus wants. Be joyful (not silly) and discovering yourself -- this should also be a time of learning and deepening for the team.

The purpose of this first meeting is to bring into focus the ultimate desire of God for man -- to live in union with him. Not too many people see this as the real end for man: many are taught to believe that (unconsciously) God isn't the sort of person you would really like to know or love with anyway because He will just make you do things and tow a line. Other people just never really believed that man was made for living with God. Still others, (this sort of an attitude will show up more frequently on campuses) don't think that it is really necessary to know and believe in Jesus in order to achieve this union with God. What this first meeting should accomplish is to show people that God wants us to live in union with him and with one another through Jesus Christ.

I Unity, oneness

The crux of John 14-17 is union. Union with God and union with one another in Christ. He wants us to enter into that same sort of relationship which He has with himself. Just as the Trinity is one so does the Lord want us to be with He and the Father and the Spirit. This is an astounding thing, an incomprehensible thing, a beautiful and loving thing. The source of everything wants us to share fully in the life which he has with himself. This is what man was made for. It is in our unity with God that we become truly whole and completely ourselves. Creation, Redemption, and the gift of the spirit are all things which God has given to man in order that man could live with God. None of these things were ends in themselves but God had in mind that through them he and his creature - man - could live together with man loving his God to his fullest capacity. The reason that Jesus came was to heal the breach between God and man and bring them together again in himself. He is the full revelation of God to man and in his Spirit alone do we come to union with the Father. It is the Spirit of Jesus which gives us the power to become the sons of God which he wants us to be.

II God calls each of us to union with him

"If a man loves me, he will keep my word,and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." (Jn 14:23)

Each and every single person is called to this union with God, there is no one whom he wishes to exclude. All a man has to do is to open the door to Jesus and keep his commandments and the Lord will begin to draw that man to himself and the Father. But this is something which each man has to do for himself. Nobody else can make a commitment to Jesus for him. In this each man stands alone, each man freely responds. God is an intensely personal God and no man comes to him unless he freely chooses to do so.

III God calls us as a people

In the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel Jesus prays to the Father that we all be one - perfectly one just as he and the Father are one. Jesus wants us to be his people. Just as surely as man was made to live in union with God so too was he made to live in union with his fellow man. In unity is the way God lives and so it is also the perfect and only way for man to live. Jesus also says in that same chapter of John that it is our unity with one another that is the greatest witness to himself. This may sound strange to some people but it is true. Sometimes people feel that it ought to be the signs and wonders performed by Christians which show the Lord to be truly Lord. But practical experience has proven the words of Jesus. Many times people have come to our community and have been totally unimpressed by the signs and wonders, the prophecies and speaking in tongues, but what has touched them deeply and has led them to seek a deeper life with the Lord has been the love and unity which they have seen and felt among the members of the community. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." It is the Lord Jesus himself who is the source of our love and unity with one another. We cannot love one another unless we have first let the Lord love each one of us. Many people make the mistake of thinking that they have a source of love from their own selves - that they can love another with a love which is their own. This is not true. All love comes from God. A love that hasn't first come from the source of all love just is not a true love, a genuine love. Our love comes from Jesus, through us, to each other. Jesus says that is the vine and we are the branches. The branches can bear nothing unless they are part of the vine. Paul says that Christ is the head of the body. The body is nothing without the head. Our love and unity is dependent upon our being grafted into Christ, a part of his body.

In order to be as concrete as possible, the rest of this section deals with examples of how people live in love and unity as the Lord wants them to.

In the Acts of the Apostles we find that those who believed "were of one heart and soul" (4:32) and that they "devoted themselves to the apostles'

teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2:42) And again that "all who believed were together and had all things in common." (2:44) These were all signs of unity and oneness in the early Church. This is how we begin to concretely live our lives together as Jesus wants us to.

To many people the early Church is too far away from them to see it as anything more than just a nice ideal but not really something which can be done here and now. Sharing concretely about your own community will bring the reality and beauty of community before them.

Things which would be valuable to share would be: how your community prays toegher, how it lives together, some of the works it does.

Be sure to talk with the people afterwards and begin to make friends with them.

II. Steps to Union with God

In order to be united with the Father and the Son and to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we need to surrender ourselves totally and completely to Jesus Christ. Repentance to the Lord Jesus and total commitment to him are fundamental and basic steps one must take before he can allow the Spirit of God to fully work and transform him into the likeness of Jesus. Have the people pray and meditate on Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 of Romans and Psalm 51.

OUTLINE:

I. Allowing God to enter fully into our lives

A. Need to reorient and change one's whole life towards God

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." Isaiah 40:3-5.

B. Seeing the difference between self-centered and Christ-centered Christian

1.) self-centered Christian (I Cor 3:1-3)
- one who has received Christ but who lives in defeat because he trusts his own efforts to live the the Christian life

2.) Christ-centered Christian
- one who allows Christ to rule his life and allows the Spirit of Christ to empower him with God's life (Romans 8:11)

C. Personal acceptance and commitment to Jesus Christ

1.) believing in Jesus as Lord and Savior and Son of God
2.) allowing Jesus to deliver us from our sinfulness and self-centeredness
3.) allowing Jesus to fill us with the fullness of his Spirit.

II. Dying to our old selves - Romans 6:6
repentance - Acts 2:38-40

A. humility
B. honesty
C. confession
D. renunciation/penance
E. forgiveness of others
F. accepting the Lord's mercy and forgiveness

III. <u>Hungering and thirsting for the fullness of God's life</u>
(John 4:14; 7:37-9)

"A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances." Ezekian 36:25-57

A. stepping out in faith to receive fullness of Spirit

B. being open and receptive to God's gifts and graces

II. Steps to Union with God

Every Christian is called to make total commitment of himself to his Creator and Savior. This step of totally giving oneself over to God is not just something God asks only of those who have reached a plateau of holiness. God demands this of every Christian from the first moment of their entry into God's life in baptism. We must help people to see that commitment to the person of Jesus Christ is a primary and basic step for growth as Christians. Surrending ourselves to Jesus Christ is something that we ourselves do. It takes an act of one's will to deliberately turn towards God and to make the decision that says: I am going to follow Jesus Christ and give my life to him.

We must not assume that because people have shown an interest and desire to receive the "baptism of the Spirit" that they have fully made this commitment and surrender to Christ. We must also realize that making a commitment to Christ is not just something that we do once. Surrendering ourselves to Christ is something we must do every day of our lives. What we must help people to understand is that this initial commitment to Jesus Christ is the first step for entering into the fullness of life as God's sons. We must help people to fully believe and be convinced that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life for them.

People must come to realize that God wants to work a radical change in their lives. Personal commitment to Jesus Christ is a first step. Repentance is a second step. In order for Jesus Christ to take over our lives as the Lord and Master then, certain changes are going to have to come about in us. Repentance is a giving over of our lives to God and giving up and changing all those ways and things that have held us back from total surrender. It is a deliberate turning away from the forces of sin and evil and the yielding of our human weaknesses and deficiencies over to the Lord. Again, we must not fall into the error of viewing repentance as something we do just once. Rather, it is a daily act of giving ourselves over to God.

St. Paul speaks of repentance as a dying to our old self of sin and rising to the new life of Jesus Christ.

> "We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For he who has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him... So you also must consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." Romans 6:6-11

Peter on the day of Pentecost spoke out to the people and instructed them on how they should turn to the Lord:

> "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38-40

It is important that people realize that Jesus Christ is the one who frees us from our sins. Jesus Christ is the one who delivers us from whatever bond of oppression or sin that may hold us back in any way or degree from living more fully in God's life and presence. We cannot free ourselves from self-centeredness and sinfulness on our own power. Only God's power and grace can free us completely from these bonds. It is the power of God's Spirit which changes us and molds us into the image of Jesus Christ.

It is important that new people see the value and necessity of repenting and changing their lives before they ask to be "baptized" into the full life of the Holy Spirit. If people sincerely surrender themselves to Christ and honestly strive to eradicate and give up any obstacles that may stand in the way of coming more fully to God, then the action of God's Spirit can take a firmer and more lasting hold on an individual's life. God's Spirit can fill us and work in us only to the degree of our openness to God and to the degree of our emptying ourselves.

Certain steps are important if repentance is to bring about a real change with our lives. The first step and perhaps the hardest for many Christians is humility. Humility is something that we, ourselves, must and can do. It is our admitting before God that we are weak and sinful creatures and that we need God's healing power and strength to change us and make us whole in him. Humility opens us up to receiving God's power for combating and overcoming sin. It opens us up to the Spirit's work of sanctification.

An honest appraisal of ourselves is necessary. We must look at ourselves and see where we are lacking and falling short as true sons of God. We must confess before God our sins and failings. It is not enough just to tell God that we are sinful. We must lay before him all our sins and renounce them. We must renounce the sins and evil of the flesh, the devil, and the world. Until we do so we will still be enslaved to them. Renunciation cannot be complete until we make amendment for the wrongfulness we have done before God and men. We must strive to pay back and mend what we have harmed and damaged by our wrongdoing.

It is not enough that we just give up our ways of sin, but we must forgive others. In an even more perfect way we should forgive others as God has forgiven us so much, time and time again. Finally, as children of God we should gladly and unhesitatingly accept the Father's mercy and forgiveness. It is erroneous for us to think that God would not forgive us. Or just as wrong to fall into self-pity and refuse to even consider God's mercy. God is slow to anger and quick to forgive.

It is good to encourage people to meditate on these steps of repentence and to seriously apply them to their lives. Exhort them to renew or make a firm commitment to Jesus Christ and then to earnestly repent and prepare themselves for the fuller life that God desires to fill them with. Finally, exhort them to have a hunger and a thirst for the fullness of God's life. Encourage them to daily continue seeking more and more of God's life.

III. Gift of the Holy Spirit

PURPOSE: To bring people to an awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Spirit for their lives which God desires for all men so that they may fully become "children of God". The "baptism of the Spirit" is presented as an initiation into a new relationship with the Holy Spirit and an "immersion" into a fuller life of this Spirit. Have the people pray and meditate on Joel 2:28, 29; Luke 24:44; Mark 16:14ff; John 16:7; Acts 2; 10:44; 8:14, 15; 19:1-7; I Corinthians 12.

OUTLINE:

I. Presence and Action of the Holy Spirit throughout history
   - A. Holy Spirit in the Old Testament
     1. represented as the "power" and "breath" of God
     2. Spirit rested specifically on certain individuals - kings, rulers, judges, prophets of Israel
   - B. Jesus' promise to send Holy Spirit for all men
     - "..for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you." (John 16:7)
     - "And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him, for he dwells with you and will be in you." (John 14:16, 17)
   - C. Pentecost - outpouring of Spirit upon all mankind
     1. fulfilling of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28, 29)
     2. outpouring of Spirit upon all men (not just certain individuals as in the Old Testament) - Acts 2
   - D. Presence of the Spirit throughout the history of the Church and the lives of the saints
   - E. Renewal of Pentecost and the charismatic life of the Church today
     1. prayer of Pope John XXIII - "Renew your wonders in this our day as by a new Pentecost" and the Vatican Council
     2. charismatic outpouring of Spirit within the Catholic Church (Duquesne University, Notre Dame, prayer groups across the United States, etc.)

II. God's Gift of the Holy Spirit for us today
   - A. Great need for Christians today to have the "power" of the Spirit to make them full sons of God
   - B. Being filled with the power of the Holy Spirit
     1. "baptism of the Spirit"
        - a.) release of the power of the Spirit into our lives - power to become children of God (Jn 1:12)
        - b.) initiation into a full life of the Spirit -
     2. Jesus Christ - the one who baptizes us with the Spirit - "I baptize you with water and repentance...he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." (Mt. 3:11)

C. How we can ask for the full life of God's Spirit

1. we call upon the Father in prayer with faith claiming Christ's promise to give us the Spirit - Luke 11:13
2. members of the community pray with you and over you to help intercede and ask the Father to pour out his Spirit (gesture of laying on of hands - sign of fraternal charity)

D. What we can expect to happen

1. what happened at first Pentecost - "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts 2:4
   a.) something did happen - they were filled with the Spirit
   b.) <u>all</u> were filled with the Spirit - not just some
   c.) they, themselves, did something - they began speak in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance
2. we can expect God to touch us personally with the power of his Spirit
3. initial experience varies from individual to individual - some effects: presence of God, fruits of Spirit (peace, joy, love), gifts of Spirit - tongues, prophecy, healing

E. The gifts of the Spirit and how we can receive them

1. spiritual gifts - 1 Corinthians 12
   a.) are means and aids to bringing people into deeper union with God and one another in Christian community (Ephesians 4:11-14)
   b.) Spirit freely gives his gifts and apportions them to whomever he chooses
   c.) everyone should desire the spiritual gifts for the purpose of building up the Church and one another (1 Corinthians 14:1)
   d.) we receive God's gifts by asking for them and stepping out in faith to exercise them
2. gift of tongues - gift of prayer and praise
   a.) speaking in tongues
      1. we speak - use our voice and faculties of speech
      2. Spirit gives utterance - language
      3. we must speak out in faith (cease praying in English)
   b.) a gift for all of us - freely given - no merit
   c.) purpose and importance of gift:
      "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself (builds up)..he speaks not to men but to God.. he utters mysteries in the Spirit." (1 Cor 14:4, 2
         a.) a means of deepening spiritual life and drawing closer to God
         b.) new dimension to prayer -
            1.) it is the Spirit within us, praising God perfectly - Rom. 8:15, 16

III. Gift of the Holy Spirit (outline continued)

2.) Spirit prays for our own needs, hidden even from ourselves - and for the needs of others (Rom. 8:26, 27)

3. obstacles to receiving God's gifts
   a.) feeling of unworthiness
   b.) fear of making a fool of oneself
   c.) doubt, temptation by Satan not to believe or to reject God's gifts
   d.) pride - feeling we don't need God's gifts

Suggested Readings: Speaking in Tongues: A gift for the Body of Christ, by Larry Christenson (pamphlet)
Aglow with the Spirit by Dr. Robert Frost
Spiritual Gifts by Stephen Clark

ANNOUNCEMENT: fourth session will be an opportunity for those people who feel ready to ask prayers for receiving the "baptism of the Spirit."

PERSONAL CONTACT: It is important that each new person be personally contacted during the week before the fourth session. This will provide the opportunity to offer personal counsel and encouragement to new people seeking to enter into the full life of the Spirit.

III. Gift of the Holy Spirit

I. Presence and Action of the Holy Spirit throughout history:

This section deals with the scriptural and historical view of the Holy Spirit's role in the course of the history of salvation. It is important that people come to see the action of the Spirit at work in the lives of men throughout the history of mankind. In the Old Testament the Spirit worked through a few specific individuals appointed by God to be prophets, kings, rulers, judges, etc. In the New Testament in the Acts of the Apostles we see the Spirit at work in the lives of all the Christians, both men and women and young and old. This outpouring of the Spirit on all men fulfills Joel's prophecy:

> "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your young men shall see visions. Even upon menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out my spirit." (Joel 2:28, 29)

In several places in Acts are recorded instances of the Apostles laying on hands for the receiving of the Holy Spirit: the household of Cornelius - Acts 10:44; Peter and John at Samaria - Acts 8:14, 15; Paul at Ephesus - Acts 19-1-7. Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

> "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good...For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit." I Cor. 12:7, 12, 13

Jesus Christ promised the Apostles that he would send the Holy Spirit to them. Until Christ's redemption had been won for all men, the Spirit could not be poured out on all mankind. It was only after Jesus' death and resurrection that the salvation of men had been accomplished and the promise of the Spirit's outpouring fulfilled.

We must see that this outpouring of God's Spirit was meant for all men who would believe in Jesus Christ. The life of the early Christian communities confirms this. The presence and guidance of the Spirit has been promised for the Church for all time. We can see the action and power of the Spirit in the lives of many saints throughout the centuries. (St. Francis of Asissi, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Vincent Ferrer are notable charismatic saints.)

Today, more than in any other time in history, there is an urgent and great need for the renewal of the power and action of the Spirit as at the first Pentecost. The Vatican Council was a summons for a renewal in the life of the Church. Pope John XXIII prayed that the Holy Spirit would pour out his works upon the whole Church as at the first Pentecost.

> "May there be repeated thus in the Christian families the spectacle of the apostles gathered together in Jerusalem after the Ascension of Jesus to heaven, when the newborn Church was completely united in communion of thought and prayer with Peter and around Peter, the shepherd of the

lambs and of the sheep. And may the Divine Spirit deign to answer in a most comforting manner the prayer that rises daily to Him from every corner of the earth: 'Renew your wonders in our time, as though for a new Pentecost, and grant that the holy Church, preserving unanimous and continuous prayer, together with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and also under the guidance of St. Peter, may increase the reign of the Divine Saviour, the reign of truth and justice, the reign of love and peace. Amen.'" (Pope John, Humananae Salutis)

The charismatic renewal of the Spirit within the Catholic Church in the United States began in 1967. Since then the pentecostal experience of the gifts and fruits of the Spirit has begun to spread among Catholics all across the United States, Canada and the globe. (A short history of how the charismatic renewal began to spread at Duquesne University and Notre Dame University can be found in Catholic Pentecostals, by Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan.)

II. God's Gift of the Holy Spirit for us today

This section deals with the actual experience of the "baptism of the Spirit" and the gifts of the Spirit. It is particularly important that people have a clear understanding of the "baptism of the Spirit" and the gifts before they are prayed for for receiving the "baptism". The leader giving this presentation should have a clear understanding of the "baptism" and the gifts. His explanation should be brief, not too wordy and in simple terminology. He should allow people the opportunity to ask questions and air their feelings about the "baptism" and the gifts after the explanation.

The tone of the presentation should be one of eagerness and joy. The leader should strive to instill in new people a desire and longing for the fullness of the Spirit. The leader should speak with confidence and conviction. He must emphasize the role of faith in asking for the "baptism" and gifts. The leader should convince new people, in a loving and gentle way, that the "baptism" is meant for them, that God personally desires them to receive the full life and power of the Spirit.

It is important to make clear that Jesus Christ is the one who baptizes us with the Spirit. When we pray with people and lay hands over them for the "baptism of the Spirit" we make intercession to God for them and ask that Jesus Christ now baptize them with his Spirit.

The "baptism of the Spirit" should not be pictured as an isolated experience in itself. The "baptism" is an initiation into a full life of the Spirit. It is the beginning of a totally new relationship with the Holy Spirit. People should see the "baptism" as the start of a new way of growing as Christians with the power of God. They should be able to see beyond the initial experience

of the "baptism" and see that their whole life is now going to be reoriented and empowered in a new way by God's Spirit. By placing the "baptism of the Spirit" within the context of a much larger picture (that of the total Christian life) people will avoid picturing God's power as something static or something one just "gets" and "possesses". Rather, they will see that the power of God's Spirit is a dynamic force that works through time to change and transform an individual and a community more and more into the likeness of Christ.

The role of faith cannot be under-estimated. It is the essential requirement to receiving the "baptism" and the gifts. People must come to realize that faith is something they, themselves, do. Faith is a stepping out for God. The gospel account of Peter stepping out of the boat onto the water is an excellent example of this kind of faith. We must emphasize to people that this is the kind of faith God asks of them for receiving the power of his Spirit. People cannot sit back and wait for God to hit them on the head with the "baptism of the Spirit". We have to put our faith into action and expect God to give us the Spirit.

We must teach people the importance of trusting in God's words and promises. Our faith is based on the promises of God's words. In praying for the "baptism of the Spirit", we claim Christ's promise: "...how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him." Lk 11:13

It is good that people come to a realization from the beginning that the Spirit wants to work in and through them and wants to give them his gifts. The leader should mention the various gifts of the Spirit and give a brief explanation of them. Spiritual Gifts, by Stephen Clark (Dove Publications, pamphlet) offers a very good presentation of the various gifts. It would do well to study Clark's explanation and to recommend it to newcomers.

The purpose of the gifts should be emphasized in the presentation. The spiritual gifts are given for the building up of the Christian community, for strengthening the individual, and for equipping people for the various works God calls them to do.

> "And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-13

A first step to receiving the gifts is having a desire for them. Saint Paul says: "Make love your aim and desire the spiritual gifts." (I Cor 14:1) We should instill in people a hunger and thirsting for all the gifts and graces that God may have in store for us. We should stress that God gives these gifts freely and to whomever he chooses. We must, for our part, be open and receptive to the working of God's Spirit.

III. Gift of the Holy Spirit

It is helpful to elaborate on the gift of tongues. Tongues is an important gift for the new person seeking to enter into the full life of the Spirit. Paul instructs the Corinthians: "Now I want you all to speak in tongues." (I Cor 14:5) We should convey the same attitude. We should help people to see that the gift of tongues has a real value and importance for them and their growth at Christians. One important aspect of tongues is that it is a gift of prayer and a gift of praise. It is an important gift for every Christian, Every Christian needs to learn how to pray more effectively and more deeply. The gift of tongues can deepen a person's prayer life. Tongues can teach a person how to praise God. What we must realize in this gift is that the Spirit of God, himself, prays within us. "It is the Spirit within us, praising God perfectly." (Rom 8:15, 16) The Spirit also intercedes for us through this gift, praying to the Father for our needs and the needs of others, hidden even from ourselves. (Rom 8:26, 27)

People should come to see tongues as another means of growing closer to Christ. It is a gift we all need to have right from the start of our new entrance into the full life of God's Spirit. We should with real confidence claim this gift at our "baptism in the Spirit". We do not need to wait for this gift or shy away from it because of unworthiness. It is a gift God gives freely, simply because we ask for it. It is not necessary that a person "psyche himself up" or feel emotionally ready for receiving this gift. Three things are basically required though. First, we should desire this gift; we should hunger and thirst for whatever God wants to give us. Second, we should ask in faith for this gift. Faith is based on the promise of Christ that he would give us the power of his Spirit. Third, we, ourselves, must cooperate with God by speaking out in faith and expecting God to give us the utterance. There are some people who will come seeking the "baptism" but who say that they don't want the gift of tongues. This is a wrong attitude arising mostly from a fear of the gift (making a fool of one's self by babbling incoherently). You should help the person to see that what he is doing is placing restrictions on God and his working and that he is not really being open the way God wants him to be. It would be better if you didn't pray with this person for the "baptism" until after this attitude has changed. You should make it a point to see this person often and talk about the problem. God still wants to give this person the gift of his Spirit very much, but he also wants the person to accept him on his own terms - completely and openly, willing to receive any gift which God wants to give him.

The lesson learned from using the gift of tongues can be applied to all the gifts of the Spirit. This gift teaches us how to yield to the Spirit and how to cooperate with God. God's Spirit will not work within us unless we allow ourselves to become instruments of God. That means that we have to use our bodies and our faculties in cooperation with the Spirit's manifestations of power.

III. Gift of the Holy Spirit

Lastly, it is important that people become aware of obstacles that can hold them back from yielding to the Spirit. It is helpful to mention some of the common obstacles and suggest how one can overcome them. For example, one of the most common obstacles that holds many people back from yielding to the gift of tongues is a feeling of unworthiness. We should stress that God gives his gifts freely no matter how unworthy we may be. (Another example of this for Catholics is the reception of the Eucharist. As Catholics we know that we are unworthy of receiving the Eucharist. Yet, we receive the Eucharist because Christ asks us to, not because we deserve it.)

PERSONAL CONTACT:

The importance of personal contact with new people seeking the "baptism" can hardly be stressed too much. We have found in our community in Ann Arbor that no matter how large we may grow and no matter how many people may come to us at one time seeking the baptism, this personal, one-to-one contact with new people is necessary and essential. Christ comes to each person singly and individually. As servants and imitators of Christ we, as leaders, must strive to make personal contact with each new person who seeks the baptism of the Spirit. This may involve a lot of effort and manpower as the Christian community grows larger and larger. It will certainly involve extra time and sacrifices. We are striving to maintain this personal contact by adding mature members of our community into the Life of the Spirit groups so that we can maintain something of a three-to-one ratio (three new people to one member of the community). In this way we try to get to know the new people who come to the prayer meetings and seek the baptism. We find it tremendously beneficial and helpful to know the name of the person we are praying over for the baptism and to know something about him. Individual counseling of each new person before he is prayed for for the baptism is important. It is good if we can meet with each new person sometime during the week before he is prayed over. This gives us the opportunity to ask each individual how he "personally" feels about the "baptism", the gifts of the Spirit, and the Christian community. It gives us the chance to help minister to any obstacles or fears an individual may have concerning the baptism and the gifts. It gives us the chance to more personally welcome these people into the fellowship of our community.

PREPARATION FOR BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT:

It is important that people have a clear understanding of what the "baptism of the Spirit" is before they are prayed with. It is also important that people freely and willingly request to be prayed for for the baptism. It is usually not good in the long run to force people or push them too quickly into making a decision. Experience and wisdom has taught us that those people who have had time to reflect and pray about the "baptism" have been

better prepared, for the most part, to make a sincere and lasting commitment both to God and the Christian community. At the end of our third seminar we announce to the people in our group that we will have prayers for the baptism of the Spirit the following week for those who feel ready to take this step. We allow the people freedom to determine for themselves when they feel ready to pray for the baptism. Our experience has shown that many will freely choose to receive prayers for the baptism the following week. We have found that those few people who decide to wait, usually, for the most part, receive the baptism within the next two weeks of the remaining seminars. By waiting, these people are better able to come to a more mature decision and commitment when they do receive the baptism.

IV. Praying for the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit"

"And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied." Acts 19:7

Praying with people for the "baptism of the Spirit" should be conducted in an atmosphere of peace. A quiet room or place should be chosen where there is the least noise and distractions. Those conducting the prayers should be warm and friendly and relaxed and should, themselves, convey a mood of peace and calmness to those new people seeking the "baptism". The opening remarks should be brief.

PROCEDURE:

1.) open with a short prayer
2.) introductory remarks (brief)
    a.) we are here to claim Christ's promise to give us the Spirit (Luke 11:13)
    b.) we realize our need to be filled with God's power to become real children of God (John 1:12)
    c.) in faith we ask for God's Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit
    d.) explain procedure - laying on of hands
    e.) yielding to the gift of tongues
        1.) speak out in faith - example of Peter stepping out of the boat onto the water
        2.) be open to all the gifts of the Spirit
3.) short prayer of preparation
4.) laying on of hands and prayer for "baptism of Spirit"
5.) concluding remarks:
    a.) trust that God has truly poured out his Spirit upon you
    b.) be aware that Satan can tempt one to doubt
    d.) use gift of tongues daily as a means for growing closer to God
    d.) if you haven't spoken in tongues - don't be dismayed; expect God to give you this gift very soon
    e.) what more to expect:
        1.) desire for Scriptures - get into habit of reading the Word daily
        2.) desire for prayer, the Eucharist, etc.
        3.) desire for witnessing - take the opportunities that come
6.) closing prayer and hymn of thanksgiving

IV. Praying for the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit"

COMMENTARY:

When praying with people for the "baptism" it is important that we do all that we can to help them be disposed and receptive to the Spirit and the gifts. We have found that when people are relaxed and at peace they can more reaily open up to the "baptism" and the gifts. Those people who pray with the new people should, themselves, be relaxed and convey a sense of peace. Their expressions and words should convey their faith and confidence and expectancy for the outpouring of the Spirit. The faith and confidence we show lends a lot of support for those who may be stepping out in faith for the first time.

It is wise that leaders choose mature members of the community to lead in the prayers and laying on of hands. Those leading the prayer should be sensitive to the disposition and mood of the individual. If a person feels uptight or uneasy, talk with him for a moment and pray with him that the Lord give him confidence and peace. If a person may feel more comfortable and receptive by sitting rather than kneeling, let him sit as you pray over him.

If a person may be hesitant or fearful of yielding to the gift of tongues, briefly talk to him in a loving and gentle way. Help him to be open to the gift and to see that God really wants this person to have this gift. Encourage him to step out in faith and speak out now, if he wants to receive this gift. As you pray over the individual encourage him to cease praying in English and just to begin speaking out in confidence and faith, using whatever sounds or syllables the Lord may give him.

In all that is done during the prayer session, be open to the promptings of the Spirit. If the Spirit may lead a new person to prophesy, encourage him. If the Spirit may move a person to laugh or cry, allow him. If the Spirit may want to heal an individual, be open and receptive. Be expectant and allow the Spirit to move and manifest his power in the way he wills.

If a person may not yield to the gift of tongues, don't be discouraged. Help the person not to be dismayed. Encourage him to be open and to be expectant in yielding and receiving this gift very soon.

During the concluding remarks encourage the new people to now expect the Holy Spirit to work in their lives. Encourage them to be open to the many ways the Spirit works through our lives daily, especially through daily prayer, Scripture, and opportunities for witnessing. At the conclusion of the session encourage one another to greet each other with the kiss of peace. If possible have other members of the community greet and congratulate the new members after the "baptism."

V. Growth in the Life of the Spirit

The Purpose of this meeting is to deal as concretely as possible with the "means for growth". Examples from your own life are best. The people should pray and meditate on: Ephesians 6:18-19; Ephesians 4:1-6; Mt. 25:31-46; 2 Tim. 3:14 ff.

Start with time of sharing how fast week has been.

I. Christ Calls us to a deeper life with him.

A. Baptism of the Spirit.

- was the beginning of that deeper life

- God has even more for us

1. Are two types of growth

a.) growth by addition

- coral, snowballs, etc.

b.) growth by transformation

- seeds, babies, etc.

- we are called to this second type of growth

2. What this growth by transformation means

a.) transforming from a nature prone to sin and death to a nature like Christ's

- is a hard and sometimes frustrating growth

- we might think that we are getting nowhere

- Jesus is with us and gives the growth

b.) We have to be patient with ourselves

- what Jesus needs from us in order to transform us is our perseverence, patience, and trust.

Transition: There are certain things which we can do in our lives in order to give Christ freer reign - things which are necessary for our growth and transformation.

Here draw the wheel diagram and explain the analogy. (see commentary)

II. Going deeper with Christ

A.) Prayer

- communication with God is most important element in our Christian lives

- in prayer Christ really begins to speak to us and reveal himself to us

1. Types of prayer

a.) spontaneous speaking with Christ

- praise and thanksgiving (use of tongues)

b.) the Eucharist

c.) Psalms (Morning Praise) and other rote prayers

2. Should have a period of personal prayer every day

3. Should pray with the Community ("where two or three...")

B.) Study

- in study we see the truths about Himself which God has revealed to other men

- we need to be learned and instructed Christians. Faith is no justification for ignorance

1. Types of Study

a.) Scripture

- prayerfully - asking H.S. to open our minds and hearts

- faithfully - a couple of chapters a day (2 Tim 3:14)

- commentaries

b.) Other Books - Some Christian writers have an amazing ability to communicate truths about God

- C. S. Lewis
- Louis Evely
- Lives of Saints

C.) Action (be doers of the Word and not hearers only - James 1:22)

- action is the external manifestation of our internal commitment
- Christ has freed us to be able to do His work in the world and we have the power through His Spirit

1. Types of Action

a.) Making Christ known to family, roommates, etc.

b.) Start a Bible study

c.) Bring people to P. M.'s

d.) Join with others and work on some project

- hospital visitations
- teach C. C. D.

Keep action realistic. Make sure you can attain the goal and set about doing it.

D.) Community

- our Christian life is meant to be lived and shared with other Christians
- is the physical manifestation of the spiritual reality of the Body of Christ

Other Reasons for Community:

a.) Guidance
b.) Support and Encouragement
c.) Prayer together
d.) Faith of Community is greater than the sum of its parts

It might be a good idea to give a brief summary and then to end with something like I Thess 5:23-24. (Merely a suggestion)

Suggested Reading: Temptations of the Spirit-Filled Christ - Donald Gee

#5: Growth in the Life of the Spirit

The week after receiving the Baptism of the Spirit is a week of a mixture of things. People usually run the whole gamut of reactions and emotions. The most common and general sorts of reations are: complete euphoria; the person has had an emotional and spiritual experience which has left him feeling freer and happier than he has ever felt before. The "I hope it lasts" sort of reaction; the difference between this person and the last one is that this person is already experiencing some doubts and fears that he may "lose it" if he isn't careful. He will probably be a little hesitant to do certain things(large steps of faith) whereas the first person will probably volunteer to walk on water for you. The third most common reaction is one of disappointment. The reason for the disappointment is varied. Some people feel let down because the B.H.S. wasnt't what they thought it would be (even after careful explanation some people continue to believe what they want to believe about the B.H.S. hence, the disappointment). Others, and this is the most common reason for the person being disappointed, are let down because they didn't pray for tongues or receive some other spiritual gift. The disappointment of these people does not necessarily mean a lessening of faith on their part but what it does mean is that some mature person needs to spend some more time with them. Finally,there is the person who experiences all of these reaction in the short space of a week. We would tend to say that this is the most common experience of people who receive the Baptism.

Each one of these reacions must be dealt with tenderly and livingly. Each person should see that you understand what he is going through and that you are more than willing to talk and pray about it with him. You must be careful not to squash the euphoria of anyone, nor demand more than anyone is able to give, nor brush off as unimportant or ridiculous the disappointments or doubts of anyone. God is leading each one of these people to Himself and your responsibility is to understand and aid that leading.

Having a period of sharing for a few minutes after the prayer is a good way to build up mutual support among all the people there. If, in the weeks before this, the team hasn't built a rapport or made friends with the new people, the sharing period will not be anywhere near as fruitful as it could be. People have to be sure of your love and friendship. In line with this, one thing which is extremely important is that each one of the new people should be seen by a member of the team either after the meeting or sometime during the coming week. This is important for the same reason it was important to contact each person before they received the Baptism- people feel much freer asking questions and seeking help when they are not in a group of people. Another reason is that some people may say that the past week has been just fine so as not to disappoint the rest of the group or because they don't want people to think badly of them because they are having difficulties. These are important difficulties and it takes a certain amount of maturity and wisdom to be able to handle them in the Lord. "If any of you lacks

wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith..."(James 1:5-6).

The purpose of the fifth meeting is to give people a realistic and encouraging picture of what it means to grow in the Christian life. The main idea which should be conveyed in this meeting is that of a balanced commitment. The Christian life is a life of balance and dedication to a deepening friendship with Jesus and other Christians. Dedication is important; without it, the means for growth presented here are of little value.

I.Christ calls us to a deeper life with Him

The point of the beginning of this first section is to re-emphasize what has already been said about the Baptism of the Holy Spirit not being and end in itself, but rather it is meant to be the beginning of a deeper and more solid Christian life. It is not only something which we desire but something Christ call us to.

Many people are confused about what growth in the Christian life is all about. Most have grown up with a certain type of spirituality which says that being a better or stronger Christian is a result of how much one does. This is in part due to the way in which people used to (and still do to a large extent) look at the lives of the saints. They see the saints as people who gave up many, many things and spent long hours in prayer and on their knees. In other words the whole process was looked upon quantitatively- if you wanted to be holy you had to do more things or do the things you were already doing for a longer period of time. But this is not the type of growth which was happening. It just looked that way to people who didn't understand what the particular saint was really doing. What was actually happening was a slow transformation within the person -- a death to self and a coming to Christ. It is this death to self which we need to go through in order to become like Jesus. We must die to sin and all those things which we do not see in the person of Christ. It isn't an easy thing to do,as it takes alot of time and patience in order to become the person Christ wants us to be. A John of the Cross, or a Teresa of Avila, or a Francis of Assisi, don't happen overnight. They are people who sought the Lord every day and waited on Him patiently because they knew that it was Jesus who gave the growth and not something of their own. The Lord leads each one of us at his own speed and what He needs from us is our perseverance, patience, and trust. A transformation is a hidden thing and just because we can't see ourselves grow everyday doesn't mean that it isn't happening. Jesus loves us and wants us to be transformed even more than we want to be transformed.

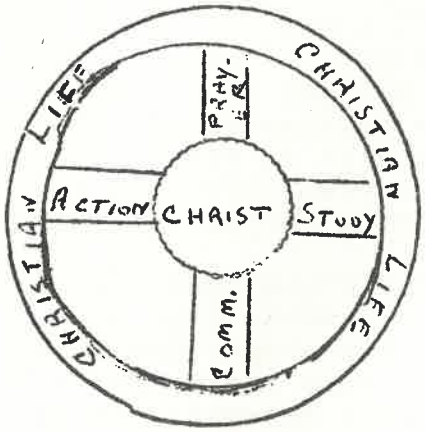
Transition

Transformation requires certain things. A seed needs the proper soil, rain, and nutrients in order to become a flower So too, there are certain things in the life of a Christian

which can be seen as creating the sort of environment in which Christ can have freer reign in order to transform that Christian into His own image and likeness. Prayer, study, community, action should be seen as just that.

The wheel diagram is not an essential thing but it does help to conceptualize the role of a definite plan of prayer, study, community, and action. If you can think of a better method, use it.

The Wheel Diagram



The Christian life can be conceptualized as a wheel. The hub of the wheel is Christ. The hub is where the wheel gets its power to move. The rim of the wheel is the life of the Christian. It is this life which must move forward but of itself the rim has no power. The power comes from the hub-Christ. Question: How does one get the power from the hub to the rim? Answer: Spokes. The spokes of prayer, study, community, and action allow the power of the hub-Christ- to put the rim-the Christian life- in proper motion, so that he can transform it.

II Going deeper with Christ

This section deals very practically with the four elements of growth: prayer, study, community, and action. It is very important to be as clear and concise as possible when talking about each of the areas. Since these things are being put forth as ways in which a Christian should make himself more available to the action of Christ in his life there can not be any haziness or ambiguity about any the areas. The best defense against ambiguity in this section is if the team, especially the one giving the talk, has had experience with this sort of commitment in their own lives. This is helpful first of all because you don't have to first convince yourself that it is a good thing to pray every day, or to read Scripture regularly. Your familiarity with these elements in your own life and your commitment to them will communicate to the new people that these are important things and not just something which one can take or leave. It is helpful also because you can speak very practically about your own experiences- there is no need to concoct example- of what you mean because you are your best example.

Prayer

In speaking about prayer it is important to emphasize the necessity to speaking to God every day in prayer and letting Him speak to us. This is how we come to know Jesus and the Father more and love them more. If we love someone and want to get to know them better we just naturally begin to spend more time with that person. The same holds true with our knowing and

loving God. To say that we love God and to never spend any time with Him is to say that our love is at best lukewarm. A man who only spent time with his wife once a week is hardly considered a good husband or a loving husband. But love and communication must grow every day and so we must spend time with God every day- even if we can only afford to be with Him for ten minutes, that is time enough for Him to begin to reveal Himself to us.

It is important to mention the different ways of praying. Some people think that rote prayers are the only way to pray. Others think that rote prayers have no place in the Christian life. Neither of these ways of thinking is true. You should be helping people come to some kind of balanced perspective about prayer. It is good, also to mention praying in tongues as something which is a gift from God and so something which we should make use of often -every day is best.

Study

One of the things which just seems to naturally happen to most people as a result of the Baptism of the Spirit is the desire to read Scripture more. Encourage this. Scripture is one of the ways in which Gpd has a desire to reveal Himself to us and we should make use of this as much as possible. God wants us to know all about Himself, He desires that we know him fully and completely. One problem with Scripture is that so many people do not know how to read it. We think that the two words prayerfully and faithfully best characterize how to read the Scriptures. How else did the Scriptures come about but that mem prayerfully and faithfully recorded what God had shown Himself to be. Commentaries are a very good and helpful way to study God's word but we would force no one either to use one or not to use one. Some people just aren't able to handle a commentary. Other books are good for study also. They should be clear and to the point. We seriously doubt the wisdom of telling people about all the good books you have read. The best thing to do is give them one or two suggestions at a time, this avoids confusion and indecision. You know yourself what it is like when you are faced with the question of which book to read first.

Action

Action is a rather touchy area with some people but it should be approached with realism and dedication. Nobody can solve problems of hunger, poverty, racism or convert the world or the city single-handed, in a day. But neither will the problems be solved unless the followers of Christ in the world seek out how to best do the will of God in these areas.

Those actions which we undertake should always be based on prayer and in acoord with the will of the Lord. There are many things which need to be done in the world but that doesn't mean that the Lord wants us, personally, to take care of all of them.

The best way in which to approach different types of Christian possibilities for "renewing the temporal order" is to look at it from the atandpoint of the whole community. The community as a whole should support the activities of its members. The support can come in any number of ways- prayer, actively helping, encour-

-agement. If the community as a whole doesn't support the activity or some activities of one or some of its members then these people should seriously reconsider spending their energy in this manner. Any project which is from the Lord will find th strength and the support of the whole community. This could be a good guideline for judging the feasibility of a project of activity.

The most important criteria to remember for taking on a project is to see how realistic it is. Have a definite set of goals for the project. The more hazy the goals the less chance of getting anything accomplished.

Because we are Christians and because Jesus has given us His Spirit we have the power to transform the world for Christ.

Community

Community has already been talked about somewhat in the first meeting. What should be done here is to talk practically about how one goes about living in your particular community. It is a good idea to talk a little about "why community" again but hopefully by this time they will have been experiencing the life of the community and will not have to be told so much what a necessary and good thing it is as much as how to become fruitful and productive members of the community. This will vary from community to community somewhat but there are some things which hold true for all communities. The first of these is attendance at the functions of the community. A person can hardly expect to be a loving and intimate member of a community if he is never around. A second way of becoming fully a part of a community is to agree to have that special love and concern for one another which the Lord wants in the community. This is an even more important thing than attendance at community functions. It would be easy for a person to come to the functions of the community faithfully and yet still not have that loving concern for the members of the community. This lack of concern is what has thrown many communities into confusion. They see that there are all kinds of people coming to their functi ons, some may have even been coming for a long time, but yet there doesn't seem to be a real unity of mind and heart among those coming nor do they seem to have a concern for one another. People show how much they want to be a community by how much desire they have for unity of heart and the concern they have for one another.

The third way in which people become integrated members of the community is by submitting themselves to the discipline of the community. A community without a discipline is not a community at all and probably won't hold together very long. If a person refuses to submit himself to the discipline of the community then that person cannot be considered a part of the community. Discipline within a community is a very important thing. Without it chaos rules and the Spirit is less able to move as He wills.

Be sure to contact people after the meeting.

VI. Growth in the Spirit #2

(Being sanctified in the Spirit)

The purpose of this meeting is to let the people understand that we are called to holiness and perfection and that it is Jesus who brings this about. Pray and meditate on Hebrews 12:3-13; Galatians 5:16-26.

I. We are called to holiness and perfection (Rom 12:2)

A. God's action in our lives
- Jesus wants to work with every aspect of our lives (Phil 2:12-13)

1.) Truth about himself (Jn 16: 13)

a.) God begins to reveal his love and power and glory to us through prayer, scripture, and the spiritual gifts - especially prophecy.

b.) We begin to experience a deeper and more abiding sense of his presence.

c.) We become better able to discern the voice of the Lord from other voices (ours, Satan's).

2.) "Convictions" - God shows us areas of our lives which he wants us to give to him more fully.

a.) Types of convictions:
- obedience (Heb 12:3-13)
- sin
- priorities - the things which we still put first

b.) We should thank God for these convictions since they are a necessary part of our purification.

c.) Along with these convictions God always give us the grace to respond.

3.) Jesus ministers to us

a.) We need to accept our weakness - need time and patience to let the Spirit teach us and help us to grow.

b.) We should surrender our problems, difficulties, and trials to the Lord.
- problems: overcoming doubts, fear, lack of trust, self-pity, etc.
- difficulties: in prayer (distractions dryness), mistakes in leadings of the Spirit, temptations.
- trials: persecution, misunderstandings, etc.

VI. Growth in the Spirit #2

c.) We should expect and allow the Lord to minister to us through pastoral leaders and members of the community.
- we need the help, strength, and prayers which come from the Christian community.

B. Fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:16-26)

a.) Fruits of the Spirit are a necessary and integral part of the Christian life.

b.) As we begin to grow in the life of the Spirit we should begin to experience more and more the fruits of the Spirit.

c.) We should desire them, strive to attain them, and let them have their full effect in our lives.

d.) As the fruits of the Spirit increase the works of the flesh decrease.

C. Obstacles to growing

a.) Not knowing and understanding what the Lord asks of us.

b.) Despair (not believing that God can touch us in a certain way).

c.) Sloth and laziness.

Suggested Reading: Aglow with the Spirit, by Robert Frost

VI. Growth in the Spirit #2 (Being sanctified in the Spirit)

This series of Living the Life of the Spirit meetings is in no way a substitute for concerned pastoral care. Just because people have attended the series of meetings does not mean that they know all there is to know about living the Christian life, nor does it mean that all, or even most of their problems have been solved. For these reasons it seems important to maintain some contact with the people who have been in the meetings. They will continue to have questions and problems. They need someone to help them with these. God has put these people in your charge - be a responsible servant, a loving servant, a generous servant.

Start the meeting with a period of sharing about how the past week has been.

I. We are called to holiness and perfection

Jesus wants us to enter into a deeper relationship with him every day. He wants us to more and more become as he is - holy and perfect. We know this is our call and we strive to attain it. But how can man make himself perfect and holy as God is perfect and holy? He can't. God himself must bring about our perfection, and he will if we let him. "...for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." (Phil 2:13) "May the God of peace sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it." (I Thess 5:23-34) Just as Jesus is the one who redeems us and baptizes us in the Holy Spirit, so too is he the one who perfects us. There is not a part of our lives which Jesus doesn't want to perfect in himself. We must, for our part, submit ourselves to his perfecting action.

Truth about himself

The more we come to know and love the Lord and live in his presence, the more we are willing to give our lives over to him so that he can bring us even closer to himself. All of the things which God has given us - prayer, Scriptures, the spiritual gifts - were given in order that the love and glory of God might be revealed to men. As we grow in the use of these gifts of God, we begin to experience God in an ever deeper way. We begin to experience more and more that he is always with us and that his hand leads us and guides us. We become better able to hear his voice when he speaks to us. As a lover can pick the voice of his beloved out of a crowd of voices, so will we begin to distinguish the voice of the Lord from other voices. We can't help but give ourselves to the Lord as we learn more about him.

Convictions

There are areas of our lives which are not completely in the Lord and which we are not always aware of; or we may be aware of the areas but have not really decided to do anything about them. The Lord wants us to be perfect and holy and so he points out these areas to us so that we can work on them and bring them into the Lord. The three main areas of our lives which the Lord wants to work on the most are: obedience, sin, and priorities.

VI. Growth in the Spirit #2 (Being sanctified in the Spirit)

As we grow in the Christian live the Lord will begin to show us that we have fallen down here or that we aren't doing so well there, or that we haven't even begun to do somthing about this yet. God wants us to obey him as loving children and so he shows us when we are not obeying him. And then there are all those things which we place before God: the use of our time, material things, attitudes, etc. God wants to be first in our lives so he shows us all the ways in which he is not first.

These convictions are not God's telling us that we are so sinful that there is little hope for us, or that we don't have a chance. Rather what God is doing through convictions is telling us that he wants another part of our life given to him more fully. Convictions are good and are a sign of the Lord's love for us. Since we want to be holy and perfect we should ask the Lord to convict us in all those areas where we need it. God never shows us an area of our life which needs changing without giving us the help we need to change. Praise the Lord for his goodness.

Jesus ministers to us

The purpose of this section is to assure people that Jesus wants to help us and that, in fact, he is the one who will ultimately overcome our trial, difficulties, and problems for us. Our role is to admit our weakness and to be patient while the Spirit works within us. Jesus ministers to us both directly and through the pastors, leaders, and members of the community. We should humble ourselves and accept the help which the Lord wants to give us.

The Fruits of the Spirit

The fruits of the Spirit should be seen as something which we should strive for. They are the sign of a true follower of Christ. When the members of a community are bearing the fruits of the Spirit then that community is able to live and love the way that Jesus wants. The reason that they are called fruits is because they are the result of a transformation, a dying to self and a becoming like Christ. The team should pray and meditate on the fruits of the Spirit and see how well they are beginning to bear fruit. If the new people don't see these fruits in your lives then the worth of the fruits is minimized by that much.

Obstacles to growing

These obstacles to make a definite difference in the growth of a Christian. Satan will use these things and any other way he can in order to keep us from the Lord. It is important for us to know what the Lord asks of us. Some people think that God asks us to come to him on our own power. This is not true and will only cause frustration and despair. God gives the growth. "...only God who gives the growth." (I Cor 3:7) Other people think that God is demanding that we become perfect overnight. Others think that it is impossible for us to become perfect. All of these misunderstandings should be dealt with so that the people have a clear picture of what God really asks us to do in order to become perfect. Despair is a favorite attack of Satan. The same holds true for sloth and laziness.
(Remember that it will be the way in which you speak from experience which will benefit and convince people the most. Fill the presentation with lots of concrete and specific examples from your own life.)