

FBCC Summary Position on the Work and Gifts of the Holy Spirit

This position paper has been passed by the Church Council on December 9, 2006

FBCC's Position on the Practice of Tongues

In June 2004, the position paper on the practice of tongues was presented to the church council by the pastoral staff and the planning committee. The position is 「do not forbid; do not promote; and do not disturb.」 The council has adopted it in 2005.

FBCC's Position on the Work and Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a promise of our Lord (Luke 3:16) without any pre-condition (Luke 3:16; 1 Cor 12:13). It is the one time experience at conversion of every believer (John 3:3-8; Rom 6:3).
2. The baptism of the Holy Spirit establishes our relationship with God. The Holy Spirit baptizes believers into the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). Through the baptism of the Holy Spirit we identify with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, so that we might walk in newness of life (Rom 6:1-14; 8:2). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the assurance that a believer is the child of God (Rom 8:12-17; 2 Cor 5:5; Eph 1:13-14).
3. The Bible commands all believers to be filled by the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18). The filling of the Spirit is related to our obedience, faith, and holy living (Eph 5:18-6:9). It is not permanent in nature and must be pursued continuously. The results of the Holy Spirit's filling are the abundant life including the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) and the power to serve (Acts 2:4; 4:8; 13:9; Ex 31:3; 35:31; Deut 34:9; Luke 1:67).
4. Spiritual gifts are power or skills given by God to equip and to build up the church (1 Cor 14:12). It is given freely by the Holy Spirit according to the sovereign will of God (1 Cor 12:11). We are to earnestly seek but not to demand them according to our own will, nor to ignore them (1 Cor 12; 14:1). The gifts that we seek must be for building up one another and to equip the saints (1 Cor 12:31-14:1), and not for boasting or self-glorification (1 Cor 13:1-4).
5. The church must encourage all believers to seek the filling of the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18) and not to emphasize on seeking the gifts of the Spirit. We need to encourage our members to discover and to properly exercise their God-given spiritual gifts to build up the church, to edify believers, and to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 4:11-13; Rom 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
6. The believer's spiritual life is not measured by the gifts but by love, faith (1 Cor 12:31-13:13), holy living, dedication to serve, witness for Christ (Rom 12:1-2; 1 Pet 2:9), and properly exercising his or her spiritual gifts (Rom 1:11; 2 Pet 1:6).
7. God is able to intervene into our natural world with His supernatural power anywhere, anytime, using any means according to His sovereign will and power (Rom 11:33-36). But not every supernatural incident is from God (Ex 7:11-12; Matt 7:21-23; Acts 8:9-11; Matt 24:24; Mark 13:22).
8. What the church proclaims is the biblical truth to lift up the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:22-23). Believers are the testimony of God's grace (1 Cor 10:31). We do not glorify our personal supernatural experience (2 Cor 12:6-7).
9. Speaking in tongues is one of the many spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:4-11, 28-31). It does not signify spiritual maturity (1 Cor 1:4-17; 3:1-3).

10. Tongues certainly include human languages unknown to the speakers (Acts 2:4-11). Whether tongues include languages unknown to man, we are not sure (1 Cor 14:2, 5, 13-16, 27-28). There is no clear definitive biblical evidence for or against it.

11. FBCC does not prohibit believers to practice the use of tongues in private as long as it is not portrayed as a sign of spiritual maturity and expecting others to follow. However, in public meetings, speaking in tongues should not be practiced openly if there is no interpreter. Believers should also refrain from speaking in tongues if it disturbs others or otherwise causes confusion (1 Cor 14).

(Note: For more details on the church's position on the practice of tongues, please refer to the position paper passed by the church council in 2005.)

12. The gift of prophecy is for some believers to receive a message from God and then make it known accurately. The message may be prophetic utterance (Acts 11:28; 21:10-11), preaching (Acts 2:18; 22-36), exhortation (Acts 15:32; 1 Cor 14:3), teaching and instructions (1 Cor 14:19). These messages cannot violate the teachings of the Bible, and need to be verified. Believers are urged to weigh them carefully (1 Cor 14:29; 1 John 4:1).

13. The church functions according to the Bible and its principles (1 Tim 3:15; 2 Tim 3:16-17). After the completion of the Canon, there is no more new normative revelation (Rev. 22:18-19). No dreams, promptings, understanding, and intuitive thoughts should be treated as the objective and absolute truth above the Word of God. No one should demand others to follow or to obey them.

14. For meetings sponsored by churches or speakers whose positions on the work and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are contrary to FBCC's, our pastoral staff should instruct the congregation to discern (1 John 4:1) and should not encourage them to attend. We invite only those outside speakers who contribute not only to the members' spiritual growth but also to the unity of the church (Phil 2:1-8).

15. For those who confess that Jesus as Lord and only Savior and hold on to the fundamental doctrine of our faith, even though they have a different view on the work and the gifts of the Holy Spirit than us, we regard them as brothers and sisters in Christ and not a cult. But we do not need to agree with everything that they practice or teach (Luke 8:21; Matt 12:50; 1 Cor 1:1-3).

16. The pastoral staff and elders of the church should correct and prohibit anyone who comes to FBCC and teaches an opposing view of the work and gifts of the Holy Spirit.