

# REFLECTIONS ON IMPARTATION

by Francis MacNutt

One of the latest practices in healing conferences is for leaders to pray for people to receive an impartation of various spiritual gifts, such as prophecy or healing.

Similarly, for years people have asked us to pray for them to receive the gift of healing to empower them to minister in their homes or churches. There is something wonderful about this practice, the practice of impartation, but it is accompanied by some real difficulties.

The first thing to note is that Jesus, in choosing the 12 and the 72, didn't ask for volunteers. He looked around at members of his community, then prayed, and then he chose. And St. Paul did the same thing. After evangelizing for several months in a city, Paul chose those who would be his successors. They

didn't volunteer to be bishop. Paul simply chose as leaders those who had already shown gifts for teaching and administration. Then he commissioned them.

The encouraging aspect to the idea of praying for impartation is that Christians, who so often hang back and let the pastors do all the ministering, are taught to be more assertive and launch out in ministry. Ordinary Christians are encouraged to see God as a source of

blessing and goodness, who loves to bless in abundance. God is not a miser. We honor God more by seeing him as generous rather than as a miser. And impartation is certainly a healthy, life-affirming attitude for us to have.

The difficulty is that it is not totally up to us to choose our gifts, but we need to recognize the gifts that the Spirit has already given to us. Take, for example, the gift of healing, which we experience at CHM so much. The heart of the gift is the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit dwells within every Christian. And so all of us are empowered to pray for healing from time to time – and we should expect to see healing take place, especially in our homes. Everyone gets to pray.

But Paul also says in 1 Corinthians 12:28 that the special gift of healing is given to some, but not to everyone. And I don't think we necessarily receive the special gift of being a healing minister by asking God for an impartation of that gift.

Why not?

Mainly, I think it's because God doesn't seem to work that way. Ordinarily, God builds his special gifts upon the natural, created human gifts he has already given us "Grace builds on nature." Let me give you two examples.

First, suppose there is a good Christian person who seems to lack common sense. This will radically affect the way the person prays with people, and the lack of common



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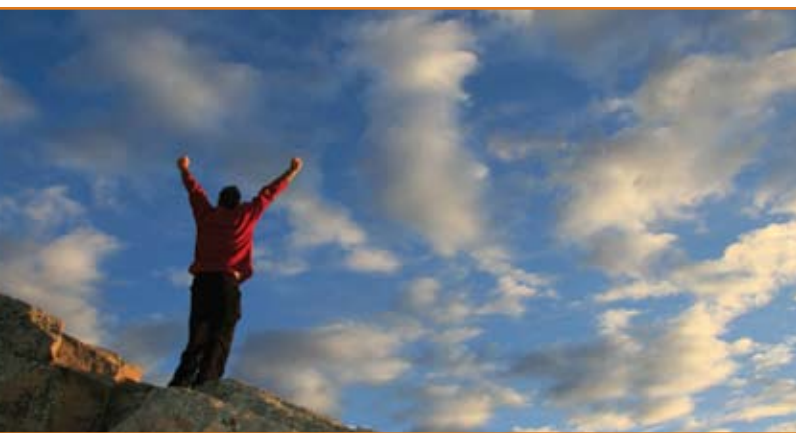
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sense will impair their healing ministry – and they may actually harm people without even being aware of it. The aspiring prayer minister may have an admirable Christian character, but in addition to having a healing gift, he/she also needs just plain common sense. Haven't you seen this? Of course, we all make mistakes from time to time. But if we lack common sense, we are likely to make practical mistakes all the time. Furthermore, people who seem to lack common sense don't seem to recognize that flaw. And that wouldn't be so bad, except that when we pray for inner healing or deliverance, we are dealing with wounded human beings and we cannot afford to hurt them.

A second good comparison would be if someone prayed for the first gift in Paul's list, which is often translated as "inspired preaching." Suppose that someone came to you and asked you to pray that God would impart to them the gift of inspired preaching. And then suppose you prayed for that impartation, and then the person approached the leader of their prayer group or their pastor and said, "I now have the gift of inspired preaching, and I'd like you to offer me the pulpit next Sunday, so I can try out my new gift of inspired preaching."



I think we can all see the difficulty with this approach to improving the preaching in our churches. There are so many natural, human gifts that go to making a good preacher that it's presumptuous to expect to preach effectively by simply appropriating the gift of preaching. Becoming a good preacher takes time; ordinarily, a fifteen year-old will not be as effective a preacher as he will at 30.

What I am afraid of is that good people will come to CHM and attend a School of Healing Prayer and pray for an impartation of the gift of healing; then they will tell their pastor, "I attended CHM's school on how to pray for healing, and I've asked for an impartation of that gift, so I am now offering myself to lead the healing ministry here."

I think we can all see that this approach might not work.

To have a real spiritual gift of healing, we also ordinarily need natural, human gifts of compassion, of wisdom, of patience – and the virtue of taming our oversized need for recognition and success.

Also, what the healing minister has learned from long experience enters into his/her ability to pray for healing. It would be highly unusual for a person to suddenly gain what most of us only learn from long experience by receiving someone's prayer for an impartation. It is not a reasonable expectation.

In addition, the minister of healing – the person who has the gift of healing – on another, more personal level, has to be free of an inordinate desire to make money off the gift, and also to be free of an inordinate desire for recognition or fame. In short, the minister of healing moves into an arena of work where there are real moral dangers that many healers have fallen into. In other words, the healer needs to be spiritually mature and free from serious sin.

Having said all that, I'd like to say that we are happy to pray for Christians who want God to use them in a healing ministry. But it usually takes time to develop the various aspects of Christian character, together with the gifts that it takes to become a truly healing person. Usually, no one person has the totality of gifts needed for a healing ministry. Ideally, we need to surround ourselves with dedicated, sold-out Christians who can help us develop some of those gifts of healing in which we are still learning and growing.

Seeking impartation to grasp the gift of healing seems to be well-meaning but overly simplistic. The right approach seems to be to recognize the healing qualities he has already given us, and then ask Jesus to give us the light to understand how best we can grow in discernment and spiritual power to heal God's wounded, hurting people.



Francis MacNutt, along with his wife Judith, founded Christian Healing Ministries. They have traveled extensively, speaking and ministering together in their mission of praying for healing and teaching others to work in this vital aspect of Christ's ministry. In 1974, Francis wrote *Healing*, which has become a classic and sold nearly a million copies in the United States alone.

*This article was first published online in September 2009. Used by permission of Christian Healing Ministries (CHM). To receive CHM's free online newsletter, go to [ChristianHealingMin.org](http://ChristianHealingMin.org) and follow the "Newsletter" link.*

# A Highly Dangerous Scripture

by Paul Anderson

I don't know any Bible verse fraught with the power to divide—or filled with more explosive potential. The man who walked with the resurrected Jesus the longest time of any New Testament writer said this: “As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you” (I John 2:27). This could bring down the church on the one hand or release passive people into their destiny on the other.

What John didn't mean:

1. *We can do away with teachers.* The church needs gifted teachers to help the people of God come to maturity (Ephesians 4:11-13).
2. *We can do away with community; we only rely on the Spirit.* We are encouraged to “not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing” (Hebrews 10:25).

What John meant:

1. *The Holy Spirit is the greatest teacher.* As Jesus prepared to leave, he told the disciples, “It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you... But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:7,13). What could be more important than a constant Companion who leads us into all truth?
2. *No teacher can replace the Holy Spirit.* The anointing is a Christian's highest asset. We never grow beyond dependence upon the Spirit.
3. *Teachers help us move toward independence.* We rely less on them and more on the Spirit. Parents, likewise, train their children to function without them.

I wonder if some pastors actually feel good if the church falls apart after they leave: “Look at how much they needed me.” That pastor has mistaken the role of a leader. A co-dependent relationship with a congregation does not release the potential God has put within them. It keeps them bound to the pastor in an unhealthy way. God has provided something much better for His children. We grow to the place where we are teaching rather than being taught.



Paul wrote to the Corinthians who scuffled like immature children, “I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready” (I Corinthians 3:1,2). Put simply, he said, “Grow up!”

The author of Hebrews wrote similarly, “We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil” (Hebrews 5:11-14).

Maturity is described as:

- not needing someone to teach us elementary truths
- training ourselves to discern good from evil
- learning quickly
- being able to digest solid food
- successfully sustaining wholesome relationships.

I no longer need review on addition and subtraction. Believe me—I have it down. Calculus, however, challenges my brain cells. You can also trust me to go to the medicine cabinet without killing myself. Not true for our grandson, who lacks that discernment. Independence separates children from adults, in the family and in the church. An infant cannot survive without the parent (or the pastor). An adult is self-feeding, self-learning, self-protecting, self-discerning.

Karen and I have prayed with young people who still struggle with issues of maturity. Some bemoan the fact that they were not ready for adult life, not taught about what it means to be a man or woman of God, about sexuality and sexual boundaries, or about money management. Many are saddled with massive college debts because no one warned them, and they are graduating into financial stress.

Pastors and parents can, and should, train those under their care for independent, healthy living, independent of them and yet fully dependent upon the anointing of the Spirit. Jesus said that the goal of discipleship is becoming like the teacher (Matthew 10:25). He told the disciples that they were better off with Him leaving. Pastors who train like Jesus are raising up leaders, not life-long followers.



How can this be done? By training people to rely upon the Holy Spirit as we rely upon him. Jesus gave his apostles heavy-duty assignments early in the learning process. *“He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every sickness... He said, ‘Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons’”* (Matthew 10:1,8). My training used to focus primarily on teaching, and I was educating without equipping. Teaching without a target is not training; it is simply filling minds with information. (We have saved the seminar notes on our bookshelves.) Jesus trained by: experience—debrief—experience—debrief. Few notes—many testimonies. He gave the disciples a piece of the pie. He taught them to

rely upon the Spirit. Whatever he did, He let them do, and they learned so fully that when He left, the ministry accelerated rather than collapsed—and he rejoiced in their success. What a way to pass the baton!

Karen and I are worship leaders, but we seldom lead worship now, because we want to train our young adults to do as we have done. I love preaching, but in order to train preachers and teachers, I must let others do it. When I miss a meeting, it goes on without a hitch. How disturbing is that; they don’t even need me—but they desperately need the Spirit.

Do you agree with me that John’s verse could pose a dangerous threat? But it can also unlock the potential for people who dream, for those ready to believe that God wants to use them in ways they could only imagine, that he has crafted an assignment with their name on it, and as they live dependent upon the Holy Spirit, the greatest of all teachers, they will walk into their God-appointed destiny.

**The Thrivent GivingPlus Program** is ending as of January 1, 2010. If you are a Thrivent member and you plan on sending a donation to Lutheran Renewal, please respond soon.

This spring, Thrivent will be starting a new program called “Thrivent Choice,” so watch the newsletter to find out how you may participate. A big “Thank you!” to those of you who have participated in the GivingPlus Program in the past.

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**Jesus trained by:**  
**EXPERIENCE**  
**DEBRIEF**  
**EXPERIENCE**  
**DEBRIEF.**



**Few notes**  
**MANY TESTIMONIES.**

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**Paul Anderson**  
**Director of Lutheran Renewal**



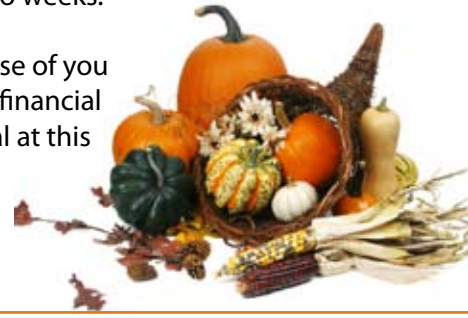
Like many other churches and ministries, we have noticed a significant decline in donations this year, both from individuals and churches. We reduced staff, cut salaries since April, and have made every adjustment possible in order to continue.

In spite of our financial challenge, we believe we are entering into a season of growth, fruitfulness, and blessing. At the 2009 Holy Spirit Conference, we witnessed an incredible hunger and desire for the Lord that we haven't seen in recent years. We had to set up overflow seating at nearly all of the main sessions, with over 2,000 coming in

the evenings. In addition, we continue to do congregational missions and seminars, both in the US and abroad. Paul and Karen Anderson lead the young adult ministry, *Communitas*, and a team of eight from that group will be traveling to Brazil in just two weeks.

**We are so thankful** for those of you who are able to share your financial gifts with Lutheran Renewal at this time.

God bless you!



## Women's Night Out

Friday, November 20, at 7:00 p.m.

*"Staying in Step with the Spirit"*

With Carole Baerg of Toronto, Canada

*Come for an evening of worship, teaching and prayer ministry*

**Location:** North Heights Lutheran Church (Roseville Campus)

2701 Rice Street • Roseville, MN 55113

No Charge • Sponsored by Lutheran Renewal

Questions? 651-490-1517, ext 12

**Carole Baerg** lives in Holland Landing, Ontario. In 1974, she was diagnosed with an immune disease and given 3 or 4 months to live. By miracle, grace, and prayer she lived, although mostly bed-ridden. She experienced a miraculous healing in January 1994 while attending the first renewal meetings at the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship. After the first few days, she realized that the pain was gone and that she was sleeping through the night, something she had not done in over 20 years.

Since that time Carole has been symptom-free. She travels almost constantly, ministering in churches and conferences around the world and has seen God perform many miracles.



## Doorway to Discovery

Guided silent retreats by the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement (LEM)

Buffalo, MN

**Men's Weekend:** December 4-6, 2009

**Women's Weekend:** April 16-18, 2010

**For more information:**

[www.doorwaytodiscovery.org](http://www.doorwaytodiscovery.org)

or call Sharon Knudson at:

651-695-0609.

## Women's Conference

St Paul, MN • April 16-17, 2010

*Tending the Presence of the Lord*



Judith MacNutt is coming back!

Details coming in January



*George Voeks* (1919-2009)

Pastor George Voeks was promoted to glory on September 25, 2009, at the age of 90. He and his wife, Mildred, were filled with the Holy Spirit through the ministry of Rev. Herb Mjorud. A short time later, in 1963, George accepted a call to serve as the pastor of East Immanuel Lutheran Church in St. Paul, MN. While at East Immanuel, a true "Holy Ghost Revival" broke out in the late sixties and early seventies with many conversions, healings, and deliverances.

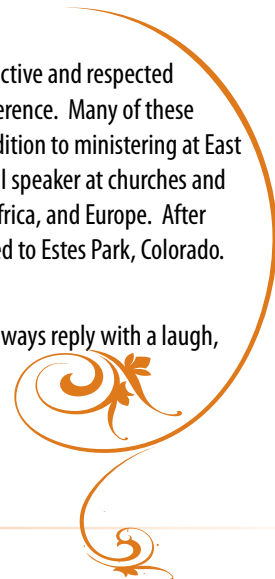
This loving, joyful follower of Jesus was a pioneer of Lutheran Charismatic Renewal and a founding father of the Holy Spirit Conference. George was a member of the Holy Spirit Conference planning committee from its beginning

in the early seventies to his retirement in 1989. As an active and respected participant, George lead annual workshops at the Conference. Many of these were either on prayer or on the gifts of the Spirit. In addition to ministering at East Immanuel and at the Conference, George was a renewal speaker at churches and events throughout the United States, South America, Africa, and Europe. After retiring from East Immanuel, George and Mildred moved to Estes Park, Colorado. Mildred preceded him to their eternal home in 1998.

When asked how he was doing, Pastor George would always reply with a laugh, "Oh, I'm living in the victory, brother!"

We are comforted in knowing he is forever victorious.

*Lovingly submitted by Dr. Bill Pratt. (Bill served at East Immanuel with Pastor George from 1973 until 1989.)*



# RESOURCES

NEW!

## Light Your Church on Fire Without Burning It Down!

David Housholder explains the world of Pentecostal Christianity in an engaging, delightful, and intellectually satisfying way. This book is intended for curious Christians and spiritual seekers, addressing topics such as: who, or what, is the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, healing, deliverance, charismatic worship, and much more. (\$10)

## Answering Your Questions About Speaking in Tongues

Larry Christenson addresses questions like: "Is the gift of tongues for today?" "What does speaking in tongues mean?" "Is speaking in tongues for me?" and many more. (\$8)

## Baptism, God's Activity of Grace

Dr. Morris Vaagenes answers questions such as, "Why is baptism important?" "Is baptism a passport to heaven?" There are questions for discussion at the end of each chapter. (\$16)

## Breaking Strongholds in My Life

A booklet by Paul Anderson that identifies key strongholds of bondage in our lives and how we can break free through the power of the Spirit and not merely by our own effort. (\$2)

## Building Christian Character

An inspiring and challenging study by Paul Anderson of 34 Christian character traits. The study gives a biblical meaning and practical application of each trait. (Workbook or Teacher's Guide: \$6 each; 8 or more, \$5 each)

## Church on Fire

Morris Vaagenes tells of the transformation and spiritual renewal that came to North Heights that continues to this day. The lessons learned can be applied to individuals and churches. (\$13)

## Dare to Dream

Do you want to discover your dream? Learn how to pursue it? Need to recover broken dreams? In Dare to Dream, Paul Anderson will help you to discover what God has placed inside of you! (\$10)

## Dare to Dream Workbook

This journaling book by Paul Anderson will assist you in creating the kind of climate in which God-sized dreams can grow. Each page has a Dream Reflection and accompanying questions. (\$6)

## Dare to Dream and Workbook Set (\$14)

## Especially for Pastors

Edited by Paul Anderson, a monthly Newsletter to encourage and assist pastors as they shepherd the Lord's flock. This newsletter is available by e-mail only. (\$12 annually for e-mail version. Please include your e-mail address on the order form.)

## The Father's Gift

Paul Anderson has written a book that answers many of your questions about the Holy Spirit. Are you wondering about the gifts? Would you like to be filled with the Spirit? Can the Spirit really lead us? There are questions at the end of each chapter. (\$10)

## The Gift of Tongues (Booklet)

A biblical study of this spiritual gift by Larry Christenson. He also traces its connection with receiving the Holy Spirit, answers questions, covers theological concerns, and discusses practical aspects. (\$2.25)

## Healing From a Father Wound (Booklet)

A message by Paul Anderson that brings emotional and spiritual healing to those who carry wounds from the past. (\$2)

## The Mantle of Esther

Larry Christenson uses the story of Esther to show the marvelous promise and power that God attaches to the ministry of intercession. Esther's mantle is something that happens when the intercessor draws close to the Lord. (\$11)

## Prayer Ministry (Expanded)

A booklet by Paul Anderson with practical help in training prayer ministers. Twice the size of the original. (\$3)

## The Renewed Mind

This book by Larry Christenson touches on five major areas of spiritual experience: Dependence on God; Facing challenges with the authority of Christ; Patience; Discipline; Prayer. (\$9)

## Ride the River

Using a parable of Lewis and Clark's exploration of the American West, Larry Christenson helps you discover how God the Father puts your life journey under the co-leadership of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. (\$11)

## What About Baptism? (Booklet)

The topics in this booklet by Larry Christenson include: Infant Baptism, Immersion, Re-baptism and Baptism with the Holy Spirit. (\$2.25)

## You Shall Be Baptized in the Holy Spirit

This book, written by Elsie Fuhrman, teaches believers how to receive empowerment of the Spirit and how to minister it to others. (\$7)



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