

Deaver-Leonard Correspondence
on the Holy Spirit

June 16th - 19th

June 19th, 2014; 2:23 P.M.

This set of letters was an exchange between Weylan Deaver and Drew Leonard, regarding for the most part the topic of the Holy Spirit. While the conversation was friendly and personal, the main issue still revolved around the Holy Spirit in a controversial way. These letters were exchanged during the time period of June 16th and 19th. The letters have been unaltered (unedited) and have remained in their original forms. The letters are as follows:

Brother Weylan Deaver,

I really don't know how to word what I would like to say, and some of this may be more informative about myself than you care to know, but I have been considering writing an email to you in a more personal way for quite some time. I trust that you will take my words as being written in a loving, caring and respectful manner.

I am only twenty years old, and when I was eighteen, I left home for the Memphis School of Preaching. I received all of my education through high school from my mother at home, saving the exception that I obtained an A.A. degree at age eighteen from a local college. I know that your children have been schooled at home as well, so I would assume that you can appreciate the fact that I did not attend public school either.

Upon leaving home to attend the Memphis School of Preaching, I began to study as much as I could, reading different debate books. A name that constantly “popped up” while reading prefaces, introductions, book recommendations and etc. was the name “Roy Deaver.” I began to investigate who Roy Deaver was, and after reading much about him, I read the book “Ascertaining Bible Authority.”

It was very clear that Roy Deaver's knowledge was beyond average. After reading that book (Ascertaining Bible Authority) in just a Saturday, it was evident that I learned more about “Biblical Hermeneutics” in that one day than I did in the entire quarter of taking a hermeneutics class at the Memphis School of Preaching. Upon realizing such, I purchased just about everything that I could find that was written by your grandfather. After I did that, my roommate and I each ended up getting the “Deaver-Moffitt” debate book for the Christmas of 2012. My roommate was a huge Moffitt fan, whereas I had never really heard of either Mac Deaver or Jerry Moffitt. My roommate assured me that Moffitt was going to “clean Deaver’s clock,” but when we both started reading the book, it was clear that your father was – just in the first fifty pages or so – effortlessly winning the debate. I pointed out such to my roommate, and he really didn't say much on the issue.

Upon reading the “Deaver-Moffitt” debate book, I hurriedly got my hands on the other Holy Spirit debate books and read the Fox debate and the Lockwood debate, but then even read your father's debate against Hicks and many other books or articles that he had written. No disrespect intended to your grandfather, but your father was/is even more intelligent than your grandfather.

One of the things that I could never grasp though was your family's use of logic. I did not fully understand all of the language about “major premise,” “minor premise,” “modus tollens,” “modus ponens” and etc., but then I ran across the “Logic” DVD hosted by Mac Deaver and sold by World Video Bible School. I purchased the entire set with the workbook and the book by Thomas B. Warren. I then proceeded to watch all of the DVD's while taking notes on each lecture. I then studied the notes and messed around with the information until I could understand

and have a decent grasp on the logic being used by your father and grandfather.

Around this point, it became clear that the Memphis School of Preaching did not have the respect for your family like I did. I thought that Mac Deaver was the smartest man in the brotherhood, but everyone assured me that your father had “gone crazy.” Around this time, a certain event [having nothing to do with your family or the Holy Spirit issue] took place that forced me to leave the Memphis School of Preaching. My roommate had already left before I did, and he was encouraging me to leave Memphis, because of the event that took place, and he was saying that I needed to come to the Tri-Cities School of Preaching. I then left the Memphis School of Preaching to finish my preacher training at the Tri-Cities School of Preaching under the direction of Wesley Simons.

Wesley Simons and I have built a wonderful friendship and we share a love for “the Deavers.” Whenever conversation is dry, we get to talking about the brotherhood, and a comment that is often made by Wesley is, “Oooooooh buddy . . . I love Deaver. Mac Deaver is the smartest man of the brotherhood. Tom Warren was here [holding his hand up at a certain height], but I would venture to say that Mac Deaver is here [gesturing with his other hand that your father is above Tom Warren].” I happen to agree with Wesley, even though I have never met your father and never will have the opportunity to meet Tom Warren in this side of eternity.

Just today though, Wesley was talking about how he would love to be back in fellowship with your family. This is by no means the first time that he has mentioned such, but it really struck home today that Wesley has lost one of his best friends and mentors. Although I have never met you or your father, I am very much indebted to your extended family for much of the knowledge that I have gained, and I know that Wesley feels the same way.

The real reason that I write this letter is because I would love to see your family and Wesley be back in fellowship. I have no desire to debate the issue of the Holy Spirit, which is why I am leaving the topic out of this letter to a large degree, but I am wanting to see your family be back in fellowship with Wesley. Without knowing a better way to say this: is there any possibility of your family being back in fellowship with Wesley Simons?

The reason I say “Wesley Simons” rather than “the brotherhood” is because I know of the love, care and concern that Wesley has for all of you in contrast to the rest of the brotherhood. While most of the brotherhood “wrote all of you off” in the blink of an eye, Wesley has considered with much honesty the position that your father has taken regarding the Holy Spirit and disagreed not out of spite like some of the brotherhood has. He did not disagree with you and your father because the majority of the brotherhood leaned against your father; he disagreed with your view because of what he believes to be the truth on the issue.

Different things that the brotherhood mocked, such as the “supernatural non-miraculous” have been given serious thought by men like Wesley, and we actually conclude that such a concept is

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neither wrong nor dangerous but rather “spot-on” accurate. Most of our brotherhood would despise such a view, but truth is truth, and whether our brotherhood thinks it erroneous or dangerous, we must side with truth, which is why we take the position that we do on the issue of the “supernatural non-miraculous,” agreeing with your position on such.

In conclusion, I am just curious if there is a possibility of being able to work things out between Wesley and all of you? I would love to see things “work together for good” so that fellowship may be had among great brethren again. I have nothing but a great deal of respect, admiration and love for you and your extended family, and I would love to see things get “patched up” between Wesley and all of you.

I hope you take this letter as one of desire for unity. I pray for all of you constantly. I mean the best with this letter and do not mean to involve myself in things that I may not even fully understand. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” (Psa. 133:1).

In Christian love,

Drew Leonard

Dear bro. Drew,

You do not know how refreshing, encouraging, and appreciated your email is. Thank you for writing out those sentiments. Would it be okay if I forwarded it on to Dad? Or, you could do so if you wanted to at:

paulmdeaver@gmail.com

I appreciate your kind words about my family. Concerning the *Ascertaining Bible Authority* material by my grandfather, I have taught that in Bible class in, I suppose, every congregation where I've preached.

I would like few things more than to again be in friendship and Christian fellowship with Wesley Simons. I believe I was the one who first suggested his name to World Video Bible School years ago, and, since, he has done various work for them. Long ago, he tried to help me out as a songwriter by getting me in contact with a friend of his who was a hit writer in Nashville. He has eaten at my table in days gone by. One thing I remember Wesley saying is this: "It's the hardest thing in the world to stay balanced." That always stuck with me.

What it would take to restore fellowship, I'm not sure. Many brethren have a gross misconception of what we teach, and base their conclusions on misrepresentations. But, if Wesley has, as you indicate, given thought to the subject, then it may not be simply a matter of explaining what the positions are. On the other hand, if he does, indeed, have an accurate understanding of what is being said, then he ought to know that we do not advocate Pentecostalism, Calvinism, modern day revelation, etc.

I like to go to Rom. 8:9 and the fact that all Christians are "in the Spirit." No one on any side can deny the plain statement. But, if you are "in" the Spirit, are you just partially in or wholly in? And, if you are wholly in, then isn't that what *baptizo* means--an immersion, a dipping of something so that it is completely "in" an element? And, if it happens at all, it would have to be during water baptism for the remission of sins. And if it happens then, it would match up so perfectly with what Jesus said had to happen in John 3:5.

Bro. Wesley is a good man. I appreciate his esteem for those who taught him, some of whom have now passed on. If there's a way we can be united in the Lord, rather than divided where, in my judgment, there ought to be no division, I would certainly want to pursue that. Let us work and pray to that end. Godspeed.

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P.S. Here's an article that just went online today, trying to make an important point that many brethren spend little time thinking on.

Brother Weylan,

Thank you so much for responding. I appreciate your taking the time to correspond with me. I do not mind in the least if you share the email with your father.

Wesley is a fine man. All of us students learn much from him. Your father's influence upon him is easily seen in class, and I feel privileged to study under such brilliance. He continues to speak very highly of all of you. I was blessed once again this evening to go with him to a Bible study, and on the way, I mentioned that I had sent you an email today. His response was, "Yep. Weylan is a fine young man."

I have read just about all of your (the Deaver's) material on the Holy Spirit and see the fine line that you draw between Pentecostalism, Calvinism and etc. I do not categorize your view as any of those views. I don't think Wesley does either, but I cannot speak on his behalf. Something that I do realize as somewhat "off [I can't seem to find the right word to use here]" though is that the term "direct operation" was bound to scare our brotherhood. While all of you were advocating views that were definitely different from the average view of the brotherhood, wasn't the term "direct operation" bound to cause a flare in the attitude of brethren? Wouldn't it be somewhat unwise, given the denominational view, for me to start saying "I believe in predestination!"? While the Bible clearly teaches a certain doctrine of "predestination" for the saved, wouldn't the brotherhood immediately, because of ignorance, be scared about my teachings? Of course, some of this stems from the ignorance of the brotherhood and should not really take its toll on me for teaching a Bible doctrine, but the scary thing is that the phrase "direct operation" is not even an explicitly stated Biblical doctrine, meaning that the term "direct operation of the Holy Spirit" will not be found in scripture as the term "predestination" is in our English versions of the Bible. I believe that the concept of the "direct operation of the Holy Spirit" is there to some degree [by this I mean nothing more than that the Holy Spirit is not limited to working only through the word today], but the term is not explicitly stated in scripture. The term "direct operation" has always been a "Calvinist" term, and the brethren were bound to be scared when the term "direct operation of the Holy Spirit" was used. Wouldn't some other phrase have been better that the brethren would have had to investigate rather than using the phrase "direct operation" which would cause some to automatically claim that all of you were teaching Calvinism? [I may be naïve; please pardon me if I am.] While the term of the "direct operation of the Holy Spirit" is not inherently or intrinsically wrong, didn't it bring some undue division to the brotherhood that could be avoided, especially since your father and grandfather had fought against a certain "direct operation of the Holy Spirit" for years? As ignorant as the majority of the brotherhood is, we really could not expect most of the people to grasp the difference of a "direct operation" as defined by the Deavers and a "direct operation" as defined by Calvinism. I really don't know how to say this in a different way, but is there any way possible that all of you could continue to hold to the view that you do on the "direct operation of the Holy Spirit," label the teaching as something else that is not so "mysterious" to the brotherhood and make a statement just stating that you are all sorry about the division that has come over such, stating that you never intended

to cause division with the doctrine? Once again, I may be very naïve and hope for too much, but I assure you that I would go to whatever lengths to help bring the two sides of the issue together.

Now, I would like to respond to your paragraph on “in the Spirit.” I will wholeheartedly affirm the fact that I, Drew Leonard, am fully, completely, wholly in the Spirit. However, what do I mean by “in the Spirit?” Given the context, Paul speaks that the Roman saints were, at one point, “in the flesh” but then they were “discharged from the law” (Rom. 7:5,6). Wouldn't the phrase “we were in the flesh” from Romans 7:5 be tantamount to saying that “we were under the law?” Doesn't the context show that when they were “discharged from the law,” they were “discharged” from the flesh (Rom. 7:5,6)? In fact, in your grandfather's commentary on Romans, he states on page 220, “When we were in the flesh' refers to when these were under the law. This is shown by the statement in verse 6, 'But now we have been discharged from the law.’” If you grant me the point that to be “in the flesh” is to be “under the Old Law,” couldn't it be concluded that to be “in the Spirit” is to be “under the New Law” rather than to be immersed in the Holy Spirit? Wouldn't it make sense for Paul to be writing to saints at Rome, telling them that they were once “in the flesh (under the Old, Mosaic Law)” but then they left that and were “in the Spirit (under the New, Christian Law)?” Wouldn't it make sense for Paul to be showing the huge contrast from chapter 7 of Romans, being bound under death by the Old Law, to chapter 8 of Romans where the saints are delivered because of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus? Isn't Paul showing a contrast between their previous lifestyle under the Old Law and their new, current lifestyle of being “in Christ,” rather than saying “All of you have been immersed in the Holy Spirit.”? When I affirm the fact that I am fully, completely, wholly in the Spirit, I am affirming the fact that I am completely under the New Testament Law of liberty of life in Christ Jesus (Jam. 1:25); (Rom. 8:1,2). I know that we will disagree on this point, but I do not deny the fact that I am completely, wholly, fully in the Spirit.

How does all of that, given my view, relate to John 3:5? I believe that the phrase “Except a man be born of water and the Spirit” is in reference to water baptism in accordance with the New Testament's teachings that were delivered by the Holy Spirit. You draw the parallel between John 3:5 and Romans 8:9, so now I will attempt to show the harmony between my view of John 3:5 and Romans 8:9. If you grant me my position on Romans 8:9 that “in the Spirit” is a reference to being completely, wholly and fully under New Testament Law, then the phrase “of the Spirit” in John 3:5 would fit completely in harmony with my view of Romans 8:9, having the meaning of to be born of water under the New Testament Law or by the authority of the New Testament's law (John 1:13); (1 Cor. 4:15); (1 Pet. 1:22,23); (Eph. 5:26); (Jam. 1:18).

With my views being stated as such, a question that I have is as follows: If a man in this age (the Christian age) is not immersed in the Holy Spirit in the same fashion as Christ promised to the apostles in Acts 1:5, will that man – should he die before being immersed in the person of the Holy Spirit – go to Heaven, having only been baptized (i.e. “immersed”) in water by the Holy Spirit's authority?

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I asked Wesley this evening about what he would require from all of you in order to be back in fellowship. His reply was that 1) there would need to be repentance along the lines of splitting the brotherhood without any serious cause and 2) there would need to be a change of mind on the plan of salvation because all of you are teaching a different plan of salvation.

I think that if we all work together, the first thing that Wesley listed could easily be resolved without either of us changing views really. I do not completely know about the second statement however; I believe that your answer to the question given above would give me a more definitive answer.

On the second thing, if one does have to be immersed in the person of the Holy Spirit in order to be saved, and a person does not realize that such is the case when he is baptized in the element of water alone by the Holy Spirit's authority, is the person subconsciously immersed in the person of the Holy Spirit as well? Or does he have to be re-baptized in water again in order to be submerged in the person of the Holy Spirit? And if the person does have to be re-baptized in water again in order to be submerged in the person of the Holy Spirit, why does there have to be a second water baptism if the water element had already submerged the individual for the purpose of water baptism by the Holy Spirit's authority a first time? And if the person is subconsciously immersed in the Holy Spirit upon water baptism alone by the Holy Spirit's authority, why would such a view of Holy Spirit baptism be pressed with such force when all persons that received baptism in water are receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit anyway? [That paragraph confused the mess out of me; I hope it doesn't do the same to you.]

Weylan, I am young; I am probably very naïve and still “wet behind the ears.” I lack experience in these areas, but I long to do what I can for the Lord, and I strive to find the unity that the Lord would have His children share. This email is quite lengthy, and I greatly appreciate your taking the time to read it. Some – if not all – of the points that I made are by no means “new,” however, they are what I believe to be the truth. If you find my views as faulty, do not hesitate to show me my faults and press the points with as much force as possible; I am always trying to learn from my many mistakes. If my questions seemed pointed or combative, please take my demeanor as one that seeks the truth and has had these questions in store for quite some time. I assure you that I seek nothing from this but the good of God's children. I want to do what I can to help, but sometimes, sadly, there is just nothing that can be done.

I always want to stress the point that I have much respect and admiration for you, your father and your grandfather. The work that all of you have done for the kingdom is tremendous. Your family is in my prayers. I truly do hope that we can come to an agreement on all of this that will bring your family and Wesley back into fellowship.

With much Christian love,

Drew Leonard

Good morning, bro. Drew,

Thanks for the kind email, and let me make an effort at reply. First, you question the need or wisdom of the terminology “direct operation.” I have heard Dad say he did not want to use the word “direct,” as he knew the term would be seized upon and criticized. But, in 1998, Bill Lockwood insisted that Dad affirm the Spirit “directly” helps the Christian. It was not the terminology Dad wanted in his proposition, but, on the other hand, Lockwood would not debate unless the proposition contained the word “directly.” So, Dad went ahead and did it. Of course, anyone is free to question his judgment. Some do not believe such issues should be debated in public. Others are not opposed to debates, but do not like the wording of certain debate proposition. Human judgment comes into play. I do not fault Dad for the proposition he affirmed and, I believe, successfully defended, in debate with Lockwood.

What other term could be used? I am not sure. It is true that the phrase “direct operation” is not stated in Scripture, but the concept is certainly there. Of course, it can also be said that the phrase “indirect operation” occurs just as frequently as “direct operation,” but no one gets up in arms over using that terminology. I always say the text is on our side. For example, Ephesians 3:16, to me, is so clear it takes work to twist it. The Holy Spirit strengthens the Christian's soul from within (where the Spirit resides). In pulpit and classroom, when I teach what that verse says, I do not usually reach for a word like “direct.” I just say what the verse says, without qualification or rewording it so it does not teach what it says.

If I say John picked up his briefcase, everyone understands that—unless there is compelling evidence to the contrary—I mean that John directly picked up his briefcase. I do not have to use the word “directly,” though the meaning is clearly implied. Imagine someone reads the statement, “John picked up his briefcase.” They then try to tell you that what it means is, obviously, that John did not directly do it, but, rather, he indirectly retrieved the briefcase by having an employee physically lift it from the ground. We would agree the latter “interpretation” is completely off-base and unwarranted. Similarly, Ephesians 2:22 says the church is the place where God dwells by his Spirit. Therefore, I teach that the Father indwells the church representatively, by way of the Holy Spirit, who is literally in the church. Someone else reads “you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit” (ESV). They say it means that both the Father and Spirit are representatively in the church by means of the word of God. That sounds right to a lot of our brethren's ears. The problem is, it is not at all what the verse says. So, again, I say the text is on my side. I understand what you are saying about the terminology of “direct operation.” It makes me cringe, not because it is error, but because I know how others perceive it, and because of my own background of being taught against the concept. The Lockwood debate helped move the discussion of the issue forward, but it would not have happened unless the word “directly” were forced into Dad's proposition.

Yes, we would disagree on the meaning of “in the flesh,” though I did not mean to suggest that you would not affirm we are all “in the Spirit.” I do not believe it can be successfully defended

that, as you suggest, “to be 'in the Spirit' is to be 'under the New Law'.” At one time Moses' law was new, and it was certainly from God. Why weren't OT Jews “in the Spirit” when God gave them the new (at that time) covenant by Moses' hands? Moreover, everyone today is amenable to the gospel of Christ (cf. John 17:2), but very few can be said to be “in the Spirit.” And, since the NT so emphatically teaches the presence of the Spirit in the heart of the believer, why would I want to fight the concept? Those in Christ have been recreated (2 Cor. 5:17), or regenerated. That was never said of anyone under Moses because it never happened under Moses. The gospel is not just new teaching; it results in regeneration that requires God to do something to my spirit to make me something I could not otherwise be, and to put me “in the Spirit” with his Spirit now in me (Rom. 8:9).

“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him” (ESV). Think what you are saying, Drew. Your position, unless I misunderstand, would have Romans 8:9 teach that, if the Holy Spirit is in you, that means you are under the law of Christ. However, everyone is under the law of Christ, whether or not they have God's Spirit in them.

I think your definition will not work. You say that “‘in the Spirit' is a reference to being completely, wholly and fully under New Testament Law...”. But, everyone is already under New Testament law, whether they realize it or not, and whether they obey it or not. If you are saying that a person who is baptized is doing so because he is obeying what the gospel teaches, then you have him already “in the Spirit” before he becomes a Christian. That brings up the dilemma brother Warren gave to brother Woods years ago on Acts 2:41. If the indwelling equals a willing reception of God's word, then they had that before they were baptized.

You ask whether someone today who is immersed only in water (and not in Spirit) would be saved. My answer would be “no,” because he has not been born of water and Spirit, per John 3:5. Baptism for the remission of sins is connected to the promised Spirit (Acts 2:38), which promise is for everyone (Acts 2:39). On this point, go back and re-read the last appendix of Dad's 2013 book, where he takes up the question of what one has to know in order to be rightly baptized. If you know nothing about the Spirit, you cannot be rightly baptized. However, I do not believe right baptism requires an understanding that Jesus is administering baptism in Spirit while you are under the water. I did not understand that point when I was baptized. I knew the Bible taught an indwelling of the Spirit would take place when I became a Christian, but I did not envision Jesus immersing my spirit in his when I was immersed in water. I think Apollos is an example of someone baptized with John's baptism (while it was in effect), who was not present in Jerusalem on Pentecost, but who, nonetheless, was immersed in Spirit on the day of Pentecost without realizing it. He continued to teach an incomplete message till he was helped in his understanding, but was not re-baptized. And, if we are right that he could not be in the kingdom without immersion in Spirit, then that would have taken place when the Spirit descended in Acts 2.

I appreciate that you put the question to Wesley concerning what it would take to be back in

fellowship. Let me reply to what he told you. He suggested repentance is needed for our having split the brotherhood without serious cause. Well, I do believe the issue is serious. There is no reason we should not get right God's terms of entry into his kingdom. It is an important subject, and connected to tremendous blessings which, I fear, many go without by denying in their own thinking that God can act through his indwelling Spirit (which they deny is literal). But, it is a little puzzling that someone thinks we have split the brotherhood. Of course, if what we say is correct, then blame for any rifts in fellowship needs to be put with those who are incorrect. Truth and those who teach it are not the problem. We have not been trying to withdraw from anyone. But, even if we were in error, I question the idea that the brotherhood has been split. Maybe Wesley knows more people than I do who have abandoned their former views. If so, have they withdrawn fellowship from Wesley? If not, no "split" has occurred there. Does Wesley know of any congregation where some percentage of the members changed their view on the Spirit, left the congregation and withdrew fellowship from the ones they left behind? I am unaware of any such happening. Is it possible that the accusation of "splitting the church" is overblown and even inaccurate? Where is this split? And, if there is one, which side withdrew fellowship? If he means that many brethren have chosen to withdraw fellowship from Dad, then that is true. But, is that the definition of splitting the brotherhood? That one preacher--or even a handful--are no longer welcome at MSOP, or other lectureships is surely not the same as splitting the church.

Wesley's second requirement is that we would have to quit teaching a different plan of salvation. I believe one must hear the gospel, repent of his sins, confess his faith in Christ, be immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the remission of his sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Wesley and I have differing views on what God does at baptism, and what takes place under the water, and, maybe, how God works in a Christian. But we both teach man's obligation to submit to the gospel's requirements—regardless what we believe God is doing as the requirements are obeyed. Must these differences drive a wedge among brethren?

I think we have already addressed much of your third-from-the-end paragraph. But, let's say a person has no understanding that there even is a Holy Spirit, and knows nothing about the Spirit (cf. Acts 19:1-7). Yet, he is immersed in water. It would seem to me that he would require re-baptism, as did the twelve men in Acts 19. It might be like someone immersed in water who thought he was already saved, or who did not know he was supposed to repent of his sins. There is an order to God's plan, and a certain level of understanding necessary to truly obey the gospel. If you were to suggest that, since he had already been immersed in water, why couldn't he just wait to be immersed in Spirit after he learned about the Spirit, I would reply that he was not rightly immersed in water if he knew nothing about the Spirit. If Acts 2:38 is normative for today (and it is), then the Spirit is given every time a penitent soul is rightly baptized for remission of his sins. If not, then how would you ever know when and if you were immersed in Spirit at some later time? Since we do not live in a transition era, and since the great commission has been fulfilled and everyone alive is amenable to the gospel of Christ, everyone correctly baptized is born of water and Spirit in the same event.

You ask why the point regarding Spirit immersion should be pressed with such force if we believe that people can receive it when they are baptized in water, even if they do not comprehend the fact. In answer (and even though I know we do not agree), let's just assume that Dad is correct. God's truth has its own value. There is value in simply being right. But God's truth is not an academic exercise; there are genuine blessings attached to truth. When it comes to becoming a Christian, the church is not helped by concept that is foggy or inaccurate. Wesley came out of denominationalism. Surely he can see that what Dad has said on John 3:5—if correct—could be so helpful in teaching people in denominations. We, in the Lord's church, do not need to always be de-emphasizing the Holy Spirit, or explaining away the Spirit's role in the very church he gives life to. Denominations stress the Spirit in John 3:5. We have stressed the water. Why not stress both? It can be done without getting into miracles, etc. James 1:5-6 says we should ask God for wisdom, and that God will give it, on condition that it is asked for “in faith, with no doubting.” Now, suppose I do not believe that God can give wisdom in my inner man, but I believe I can get wisdom from studying more Bible. If so, I am unable to ask “in faith” that God help me in a way contrary to how I believe God works today. So, I still say the prayer, but what I really mean is that I plan to grow wiser by my own study, rather than believe God can actually, in some unexplained way, instill additional wisdom in me. Do you see that I am, thereby, hurting myself. So, when you ask why the point needs to be pressed, I believe much is riding on the church's beliefs about the Spirit. To the extent we deny his role, as stated in the Book he wrote, we hurt ourselves. And, misunderstandings about the Spirit's role help us to further deny that he is doing things the Bible says he is doing. Hopefully, that can help you see where I am coming from.

The issue is too significant to be swept beneath the rug in the name of brotherhood unity. Brethren have for years debated the indwelling. Why can't it ever be settled? In too many minds it has become taken for granted that the subject is not too important, doesn't merit much study, and brethren can believe whatever they want as long as they don't agree with Mac Deaver. Yet, what Dad has written would settle the whole literal vs. representative controversy and, at the same time, pull so many verses together into a position that is coherent and consistent, without doing violence to any text. Much hangs on creating and maintaining the unity of the Spirit. But, like a stock market correction can be painful to the economy, a doctrinal correction can be painful to the brotherhood if it could mean losing friends, having to look at a passage with fresh eyes, having to admit I was wrong, and so on. Whereas I see a necessary doctrinal correction, other people see a needless controversy. If Wesley sees it as needless controversy, then he may always perceive us as troublemakers who should have just been quiet. I'm not suggesting it as a perfect parallel, but imagine Wesley's response if a Baptist preacher said, “Wesley, you need to stop preaching that baptism has to be for remission of sins and, then we could be in greater harmony.” Wesley would not back down in his preaching because of the significance he accords the subject, even if it be controversial with others.

Having said that, I'm sure there are many who think that Dad eats, sleeps and breathes controversy on the Holy Spirit. I can assure you that is not the case. The last public debate he had

on it was in 2011, and the one before that in 2000. That's two debates on that issue in a dozen years. You can listen to his sermons at <http://biblicalnotes.com/audio/> and see it is not a topic of constant preaching. Lately, many of his articles have been on apologetics, taking to task some of today's noted skeptics. But, if brethren only hear his name in connection with this issue, they form an impression that he is consumed with it. Given opportunity, he presses it because of the importance he sees in it, and gladly pays the price without becoming bitter or responding to his critics the way they often treat him.

Though we've not met, Drew, I much appreciate your love of truth, sincerity, and willingness to kindly press your positions. Some brethren cannot criticize without language that is caustic, sarcastic, demeaning, insulting. So, even if we disagree on certain points, it is heartening that we can do so on friendly terms, as it should be when brethren want to dig into God's word and be wherever truth is. Thanks for your prayers, and the respect you have for my father and grandfather. Thanks for taking time to write, and I hope we can stay in touch, and that you feel free to write, even if we do not see eye to eye on each particular. Maybe you will give me something to consider, or vice versa.

At one time, I was a twenty year old preacher, like you. Study with a prayerful heart, always willing to learn. Respect experience and wisdom in men such as Wesley. Don't let yourself be brought under the influence of the brotherhood's version of political correctness. Always love truth more than the good will of fellow preachers. Be more concerned with how God sees you than with your reputation among your peers or brotherhood luminaries—God will make or break reputations at Judgment. One day you will turn around and be forty-six, like me. I am glad to count you a young friend. Godspeed.

Weylan Deaver

Brother Weylan,

I greatly appreciate, once again, your taking the time to read what I write and respond to it. I was reading your email, which I had printed out, yesterday, at a table at the Tri-Cities School of Preaching school building when an individual walked in and asked what I was doing. I explained, and the individual said, "Well, Drew, he wrote you a small book!" and then after a few moments passed, the individual said, "And these guys don't even get paid to write you!" So I greatly appreciate your taking the time out of your busy schedule to correspond with me. When I sent the first few emails, I truly expected to be shut down or to be told "Just reread Dad's book." or something along those lines. Anyway, with that being said, I would like to respond one final time to clear up some things on my end, possibly point out a few other things and then finish corresponding. We both know that this could go on for an eternity, and hopefully, we may be able to continue it just that long in Heaven. :) If you respond to this email in depth, I will ponder what you say, read it with an open mind and probably just respond by saying, "Thank you." and a few other remarks. With that being said, I will just go down through your email and write my thoughts about what you wrote.

You say, in reference to the term "direct operation" and Ephesians 3:16,17, "Of course, it can also be said that the phrase 'indirect operation' occurs just as frequently as 'direct operation,' but no one gets up in arms over using that terminology." I think you make a grand point there. While I do not believe in a Calvinistic "direct operation" of the Holy Spirit, my thoughts, I imagine, are probably very close to yours on Ephesians 3:16,17. I believe that there is some sense in which the Christian may contact God through prayer, making request regarding the various degrees of providence that God gives to the saints, and I believe that God can/will do something in a supernatural non-miraculous way to assist the saint that made such a request. I believe that the Christian will benefit more when praying before a Bible study than when the saint would not pray before the Bible study. I believe the Holy Spirit is living and active today in areas other than the word of God. However (and I believe that you agree with me; I am not sure though), I do not believe that the Holy Spirit teaches me in a direct way what the scriptures mean, for such would make my views of every scripture infallible (and if you have a direct operation of the Holy Spirit that is teaching you in a direct way what the scriptures mean, and I have a subconscious direct operation of the Holy Spirit [because I was aware upon baptism that I would receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit] that is teaching me in a direct way what the scriptures mean, and we disagree on certain points of the Bible [which we do; Holy Spirit Baptism for instance], then the Holy Spirit is feeding one of us error in a direct way). I also do not believe (and I am 100% sure that you don't believe this either) that our free-moral agency is taken away. Just to clarify on the topic of the "direct operation" of the Holy Spirit though, would you mind giving me a list of what you believe that the "direct operation" does for you? Sometimes it is tough to keep straight the differences of what all of you actually teach and what I have heard from critics that you teach. I hear about all of you teaching "extra revelation," but then you clearly denied such a thing in one of your emails, so it is just tough for me to keep straight what you actually teach on the subject; a list, I believe, would be very helpful. If you hold the position that you can't really

assemble a list because you aren't fully aware of all of the things that the "direct operation" does, I completely understand, but if you do believe certain things that the "direct operation" does [and possibly even what the "direct operation" does not do] and can list them, that would be very helpful. That way, when people say, "The Deavers teach . . ." I can say "Yes, they do." or "No, that is inaccurate. Weylan says differently here. You need to check your facts."

Now, in the middle of the third paragraph, you say, "Therefore, I teach that the Father indwells the church representatively, by way of the Holy Spirit, who is literally in the church." On page 42 of the "Deaver-Lockwood" debate, Bill Lockwood quotes your father as saying, "If the Holy Spirit's indwelling is not literal, not direct, it amounts to no indwelling at all." Wouldn't that mean that God's representative indwelling, as you teach it then, amounts to no indwelling at all (1 John 4:16); (Eph. 2:22)? Wouldn't that also mean that Christ's indwelling, if it is representative through the system of faith, amounts also to no indwelling at all (Eph. 3:17)? I do not believe that the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the saint by the medium of the word alone, as you will see later, but isn't a representative indwelling of God and Christ still an indwelling and does not amount to no indwelling at all?

Now, to the discussion of "in the Spirit." By the phrase "in the Spirit," I first gave my view as "under the New Law," which is somewhat ambiguous, as you pointed out. I know you didn't make the following statement, but just to show what I do not believe. I do not believe in Bales' position that only the saints are amenable to the New Law. I agree completely that we are all (Christian and non-Christian alike) subject to/under/amenable to the New Law (Acts 10:36); (John 17:2). What I mean, more accurately stated, is that all are "subject to" the New Law, but few have "subjected themselves to" the New Law. I believe that Paul is telling the Jews that they were no longer "in the flesh (subject to the Old Law)" but they were "in the Spirit (had subjected themselves to the New Law)." I believe the difference of "being subject to" and "having subjected to" is the contrast of the flesh and Spirit of Romans 8:9. The Jews were no longer "subjecting themselves to" the Old Law, but they had "subjected themselves to" the New Law, while the non-Christian, obviously, would not have submitted himself to the New Law, therefore, he would not be "in the Spirit."

You make the statement, "At one time Moses' law was new, and it was certainly from God. Why weren't Old Testament Jews "in the Spirit" when God gave them the new (at that time) covenant by Moses' hands?" To this, I say that the people to whom Paul was writing were not "in the Spirit" because they were under a New Law; they were "in the Spirit" because that was the law in which the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was provided (Gal. 3:2,3); (Gal. 5:16). The contrast between "flesh" and "Spirit" is easily seen in 2 Corinthians 3:1-8. When Paul said, in 2 Corinthians 3:6, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." wasn't he showing the contrast between the Old Law, which was only able to point out sin but not truly justify man (Rom. 3:20); (Acts 13:39), and the Spirit's Law that provides life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1,2)? And then Paul goes on to mention in 2 Corinthians 3:7,8 that the Old Law was glorious, but the ministration "of

the spirit” would be even more glorious. Wouldn't Paul be speaking about the New Law of life in Christ Jesus that may not necessarily even be in the genitive case, meaning “of the spirit” but possibly in the ablative case, meaning “from the spirit” (2 Cor. 3:8)? Wasn't Paul using the same language in 2 Corinthians 3 as he was in Romans 8, talking about the two different laws that a Jew would have needed to have submitted to during two different time periods (flesh-Old Law; Spirit-New Law)? If you don't agree, I understand, but it seems to fit together in my mind. Of course, that wouldn't be the first time that something seemed to fit and really didn't. :)

You also make the statement, “. . . then you have him already 'in the Spirit' before he becomes a Christian.” I do not believe so. I believe that a person that hears, believes, repents, confesses but has not been baptized yet has not “submitted to” the law of the Spirit yet; therefore, they are not “in the Spirit.” They would have still been outside (by outside, I mean they had not submitted to the law; they were still required to be obedient to it, and they were amenable to it) of the law of Christ.

You also make the statement, “If the indwelling equals a willing reception of God's word, then they had that before they were baptized.” I do not believe that the indwelling does equal a willing reception of God's word. I believe that the indwelling amounts to a relationship that we build with the entire Godhead – not just the Spirit – upon obedience (2 Cor. 6:16-18); (Acts 5:32); (2 John 9). We, upon our obedience, have a relationship with Deity that the world does not have; therefore, we “have” the Holy Spirit just as much as we have God and the Son; the disobedient do not have the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32); (2 John 9).

You say, regarding the attendant spiritual blessings that are associated with the indwelling Spirit, “It is an important subject, and connected to tremendous blessings which, I fear, many go without by denying in their own thinking that God can act through his indwelling Spirit (which they deny is literal).” If it is the case that a man can subconsciously be immersed in the Holy Spirit when only thinking that he is being baptized in water by the Holy Spirit's authority to receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, not envisioning, like you, that his human spirit would be immersed in the Holy Spirit, why could it not then be the case that the people, who are not perceiving to have a personal, direct indwelling of the Holy Spirit, would subconsciously receive an equivalent degree of the “tremendous blessings” that are attached to the the personal, direct indwelling of the Holy Spirit? In other words, you say that many are going without the tremendous blessings, but why aren't they receiving them subconsciously like one would when being immersed in water, perceiving a reception of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?

You mention the “split” in the brotherhood. I will not really touch any of that. I believe that your statements summarize to a large degree of what we believe to define “the split.” It truly does sadden me the way that things have gone. Regarding the Memphis School of Preaching though, I don't pay any mind to what they think or do. My roommate and I were pushed out of that institution because of rank liberalism that is steadily increasing among their ranks; sometimes “splits” are necessary if it is a result of error.

You then make the statement, "I believe one must hear the gospel, repent of his sins, confess his faith in Christ, be immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the remission of his sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit." I believe that there is some equivocation in that statement. You have "(for) the gift of the Holy Spirit" acting as if it is an adverbial prepositional phrase answering the question of "Why is one immersed?" meaning that one is immersed in order to obtain the Holy Spirit, whereas your teaching is rather that one has to be immersed in Spirit in direct conjunction with an immersion in water in order to be saved [I provide a diagram below of your sentence on what one must do in order to be saved, simply to demonstrate how you have "(for) the gift of the Holy Spirit" being used in the sentence; you will also notice that I have the adverbial prepositional phrase "in water" diagrammed, answering the question of "Where is one immersed?" or "In what element is one immersed?"; however, you do not have a phrase of "and in Spirit" which you have pressed so heavily, seeing that you say that one cannot even be saved unless he is immersed in both water and the Holy Spirit]. So when we are baptized today in the water and in the Holy Spirit, we are immersed in something before we can even receive it as a gift. Your position must then be either that 1) one's being immersed in the Holy Spirit is a result of salvation, because it is given as a gift to those who have received the remission of sins in baptism in the name of Christ, or 2) it is included in God's plan of salvation and must be received at a point before baptism. Now, you already stated in your last email, "You ask whether someone today who is immersed only in water (and not in Spirit) would be saved. My answer would be 'no,' because he has not been born of water and Spirit, per John 3:5." So your position must be either that 1) the Holy Spirit is result of salvation or 2) the Holy Spirit is a necessity for salvation. It cannot be both; I believe this is the law of excluded middle. If the Holy Spirit is a gift because of proper baptism, then it cannot be a requirement for proper baptism. If the Holy Spirit baptism is a requirement in order to be baptized properly, then the Holy Spirit cannot be given as a result of proper baptism. Some "True/False" questions that I have are:

1. In the Christian age, today, the Holy Spirit is given as a result of correct baptism (Acts 2:38). T or F
2. In order to be baptized correctly in this age, today, one must be baptized in both the element of water and the person of the Holy Spirit. T or F

Now, if one answers the first question as "true" and the second question as "true" then wouldn't the following syllogism be demanded:

Major Premise: Since it is the case that one receives the Holy Spirit as a result of correct baptism.

Minor Premise: Since it is the case that correct baptism consists of both water and the person of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion: It must be the case that a person properly baptized had the Holy Spirit before he could receive it as a result of proper baptism.

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See, if one's spirit is submerged in the Holy Spirit in order to be saved, then he can't receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as a gift because he was saved! At which point does the Holy Spirit come? My conclusion is that the Holy Spirit comes to the saint after proper baptism in water alone by the Spirit's authority, which allows us to say that we are the sons of God (Rom. 8:14-17).

I know that your father is not constantly thinking about the issue of the Holy Spirit. I have downloaded – and continue to download – every MP3 sermon that has been uploaded and will be uploaded to Biblical Notes. I also “copy/paste” all of his articles to a word document and save them in a specific folder. I am constantly on the site, checking to see when a new book or something will be released. I look forward to reading more by you and your father in the future.

You mentioned that it is heartening to discuss these certain points on friendly terms, even though we disagree. I wholeheartedly agree with you. I have greatly appreciated the kindness and patience that you have shown to me in the last few days. I plan on staying in touch; I am sure that I will have other questions on other topics in the future. I also greatly appreciate the knowledge and intelligence that you have. When my roommate and I were at the Memphis School of Preaching, we were mocked by most of the students and even some of the instructors for constantly debating different issues in our apartment between the two of us as if Bible discussion was a bad thing. Sadly, most of the other students could not carry a conversation about the Bible that was deeper than a Sunday School class, let alone a conversation on the Bible that was highly controversial. Your ability to reason and think impresses me greatly. Your father, however, thinks deeper than anybody that I have ever met; I greatly enjoy his writings and wish that others had the admiration and respect – at least for the way he thinks – as I do. I love it when you have new books come out, so don't let up. :)

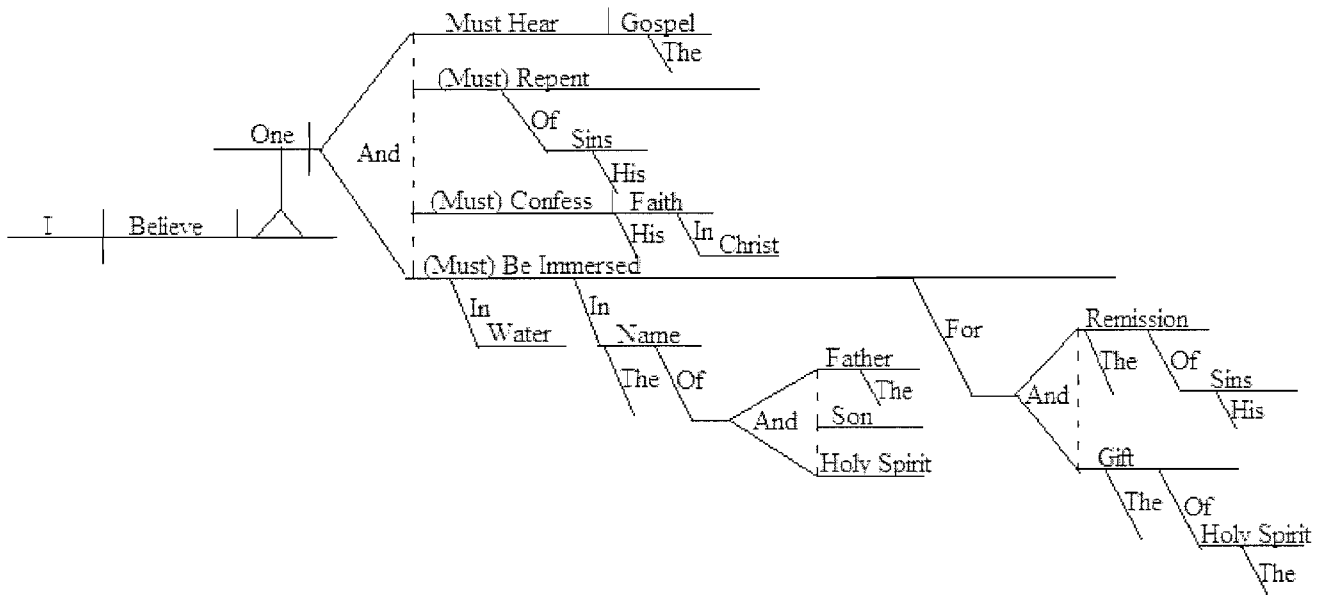
I do not mean to come across as arrogant, combative or any other terrible characteristic; I have tried to press my points in a kind and respectful way. As I stated before, please, if my disposition seems to be not the best, please take it as one that seeks truth and the higher good. In words of Bill Lockwood in the “Deaver-Lockwood” debate though, “We are certainly enjoying a warm discussion.” :)

Your statements of wisdom are greatly encouraging. I appreciate, once again, your taking the time to read this email and your responding to the other ones. If we never meet physically, I pray that we are able to reign together eternally in Heaven.

In Christian love,

Drew Leonard

Diagram of Weylan's Plan of Salvation



Bro. Drew,

You are a delight to correspond with, and I suspect, in the broad range of vital biblical subjects, we might agree on 99% of things. I don't know how you grow if you cannot think, study, and ask questions. My grandfather and Thomas Warren were closest of friends, and they debated a subject back-and-forth until they located the position that could withstand testing. Then they adopted that view and went to war with it.

You are a very articulate fellow, well-spoken, logical. Your attitude, eagerness and humble disposition are appreciated, as are all the complimentary things you have said about my family, myself, or any of our books, articles, etc.

Admittedly, we can each pen lengthy emails. Like you said, such an exchange could go on forever, and I do not think either of us wants that. I would certainly not want to appear to be cutting you off or being unwilling to correspond. In fact, I would enjoy hearing from you regularly. But, as you seemed to indicate, we ought to wrap up this particular series of exchanges. You can say what you like in reply, and in no case will I consider us enemies.

I've only read through your latest once, and want to say a few things before teaching Bible class tonight (2 Samuel chapters 18-19). I won't even attempt to reply to each point you made, so this will not be exhaustive. We can always speak later on any given thorny particular. Also, my random reply will not be sequential to what you wrote.

You asked about my statement regarding saints going without blessings due to not understanding how God works in the giving of blessings. I think I had mentioned James 1:5 and the prayer for wisdom. If I pray for wisdom but do not believe God can give it, then I will not receive wisdom in answer to that prayer. The ways of providence are beyond my sorting out, but my suggestion is that--like the matter of praying in faith for wisdom--if you actively oppose an avenue of divine help, how could it be given in answer to prayer? It is one thing to pray without knowing how God works in answering it (aren't we all in that boat?). It seems another kind of thing to pray for something while having it in your mind that God cannot or will not answer in a certain way. In that case, it would seem that you limit your blessings by opposing (unintentionally) a potential answer to prayer.

You asked about what I said on Ephesians 2:22, that the Father and Son dwell in the church by means of the literal presence of the Spirit. If the Father's indwelling is representative, does that amount to no indwelling at all? My answer would be that if deity is not in the church, there is no indwelling at all. The representative-indwelling-through-the-word view implies (unintentionally) no indwelling of deity. My position is an actual presence of deity in the person of the Holy Spirit. The Father is in heaven with Jesus at his right hand. The Spirit was sent to earth on Pentecost to indwell the church. The Father and Son are here because the Spirit is here. Take the Spirit out of the church, and the Father and Son are not even representatively in the church. That would be my

view. And I don't think Ephesians 2:22 is ambiguous. When Jesus was on earth, he embodied the fullness of the Godhead (cf. Colossians 2:9), even though the Father and Spirit were in heaven. To see Jesus was to see the Father. Today, with the Spirit in the church, the Son and Father are also here. Take out the Spirit, and God is not in his own church. The word's being in the church is not the same as God's being in his church.

I do not believe the Spirit gives revelation, in the sense of new inspired information, to us. Since the power at work within us can accomplish more than we can ask or think, there is, of course, no way to quantify what all God can do or is doing in his church. Similarly, I have no idea of all the angels are currently doing on our behalf (Hebrews 1:14). However, I definitely make no claim to infallibility, and do not believe the Spirit grants wisdom or understanding to anyone to the degree they could make a claim of infallibility. That would be way beyond the pale. God obviously grants wisdom in answer to the prayer of faith. But I do not believe it arrives with empirical verification. How do you know when the prayer is answered? To what degree is the prayer answered? What factors constituted the answer? Was it external, internal, or both? You would never be able to sort that out.

Is the Spirit something necessary for salvation, or something given after salvation? You may be missing a distinction Dad has made relevant to the question. My answer would be, both. When a penitent man, based on his faith and confession, is immersed in water, God forgives him by the blood of Jesus. That's forgiveness. But regeneration is something else. After forgiveness, the soul is immersed in Spirit (while still under the water), regenerating the formerly dead-in-sin person. Forgiveness and regeneration make him a son, and that qualifies him to receive the Spirit in his heart (Galatians 4:6). So, Dad draws a distinction between immersion in Spirit and the subsequent indwelling of Spirit.

I would answer "true" to both your true/false questions. In your syllogism, the conclusion would need clarification, specifically, you have to precisely define "had the Holy Spirit."

Here's how Dad described the process in a recent article:

"Now, the baptizer and the alien sinner stand in the water before the audience. The sinner is then lowered (immersed) in the water. What happens while he is under the water? The first thing that happens is that God forgives the man, and that forgiveness takes place in the mind of God. God no longer counts the man a sinner! Since he has done everything that the New Testament requires of him to become a child of God, God now grants that much desired forgiveness (Acts 2:38; 22:16). The human spirit is now clean (Eph. 5:26; Heb. 10:22). Second, God regenerates that human spirit since it is now forgiven of all sin. This means that the Holy Spirit actually and personally and directly contacts the human spirit and changes its nature! The human spirit is revitalized; it is given spiritual life (Tit. 3:5, 6). Its nature is now altered (2 Pet. 1:4). Now, why must regeneration follow forgiveness? It must follow instead of precede because if the alien sinner were still in his sins, then God would be giving spiritual life to one who remained guilty of his sins. Any sinner must be

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*forgiven before he can be granted spiritual life! If someone objects to the Holy Spirit's being placed within the **body** of the baptized person in order to regenerate the spirit of that person, he must remember that the Holy Spirit is being given to a forgiven person! At this point of the process, the Spirit is within the body but outside the spirit of the person. He works from the outside of the human spirit or heart to regenerate it. Why? Because the nature of the forgiven person must be changed before the Spirit can take up his permanent abode! But if someone objects and says: "Yes, but Mac is saying that the Holy Spirit is within the body of a person not yet in the kingdom," my response would be that (1) certainly he is within the body of a person not yet in the kingdom, but (2) he is in the body of the person who is about to enter the kingdom and who is under the water, and (3) he is in the body of the person who stands already forgiven!*

Then, following the forgiveness and regeneration, the Holy Spirit moves to within the spirit or heart of the person who is immersed in water. How do we know that this act takes place at this time? We know it because Paul tells us. "And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). Paul doesn't simply state that the Spirit moved to within our bodies, but into our hearts. And he cannot take up his abode in an unholy place. His "abiding" in this permanent location is the indwelling of the Spirit, which takes up his abode for holy purposes (Rom. 8:9-11; cf. 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Gal. 5:22-24; Eph. 1:13, 14; 1 Cor. 6:12-20)."

I've not given a list, as requested, of things I believe the Spirit does. But I can say I do not believe in modern day revelation, physically perceptible "nudges" and the like. I believe in a supra-literary "leading" (cf. Romans 8:14), but not that it is empirically perceived. In matters of divine providence, we just cannot venture very far in the water without its being over our heads. Like you, I believe God never compromises my free will. But, in cooperation with him, and his working in me, much more can be accomplished than without him.

I need to wrap this up, disjointed as it may be. If you need clarification, or a future question comes up, just ask. I welcome your effort to set the record straight if you hear us misrepresented. How refreshing that is. None of us is trying to hide or deceive. Keep up the good work, and keep in touch. Give my best to Wesley when you see him. I hope he doesn't fear for your soul due to this correspondence, and that he does not think I am trying to sneak in and gain some influence over a young preacher. And I hope to one day shake his hand in full fellowship again, even if we never agree completely on this subject. If you can do anything in the realization of that noble goal, Godspeed.

Weylan

P.S. Impressive sentence diagram.

Brother Weylan,

Thank you so much for taking the time to correspond. I appreciate the depth with which you replied. I will study your statements with much examination. I do look forward to staying in contact in the future.

While I am primarily writing just to say “Thank you!” for corresponding with me, I also would like to know if I have permission to offer the full correspondence to others? My roommate and I run a page on Facebook called “Thus Saith the Lord” and we write frequently on various topics and have been writing tracts. We would like to be able to put the full correspondence on that page for distribution by either mail or pdf download. If you are uncomfortable with such, I will not do it, but I would still like to share the correspondence with a few close friends and family if you don’t mind? Once again, if you don’t want it being passed around, just let me know, and I will honor that request.

It has been a great learning experience writing back and forth with you. I appreciate it greatly.

I hope your Bible class went well last night. I will mention your best wishes to Wesley.

In Christian love,

Drew Leonard

Bro. Drew,

I appreciate your asking permission to use the material. There are preachers who just assume that private correspondence is fair game to publish anywhere, without any permission necessary, which I deem an absence of literary ethics. Some of my material was written hastily, and none with a view toward public offering, but, rather, as personal correspondence among friends. No doubt I would have said some things differently, were I writing for a general audience instead of jotting off quick replies to you. I'd prefer you not make it available to everyone on Facebook. You may/may not be aware, but there is a hyper-critical opposition out there whose operating philosophy as it pertains to their enemies seems to be: anything you say can and will be used against you in perpetuity (e.g. in a publication like the "Defender," or on their Facebook page, or in some private online group). I don't correspond with them, or want to provide them any material, unless it be impersonal and "official," such as via articles on our website or books, etc. Having said that, I don't mind if you want to show our emails to your friends or family or Wesley, at your discretion. As noted prior, I appreciate you, as well, and look forward to our staying in contact. May the Lord grant you many years of fruitful service to the kingdom, to his glory!...

Weylan