

# PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path"  
Psalm 119:104*

February 4, 2018

## A Porous Case

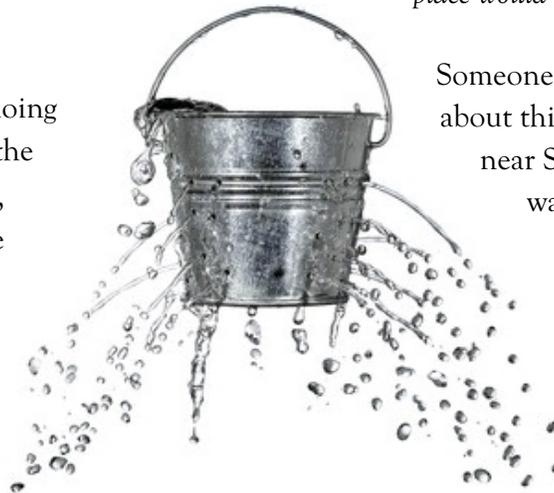
by Frank Himmel

A tract entitled *Baptism*, published by the Mennonites, says, "The Church's mode of baptism is by pouring a small portion of water on the head..." However, the tract's arguments offered in support of the practice of pouring strike me as rather porous. Consider them.

1. *The apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit. It came from above and descended on them. Joel said it was God "pouring out My Spirit." Since the Spirit was poured, and it was a baptism, pouring is the proper mode of baptism.*

In the other case of Holy Spirit baptism, the Bible says the Spirit "fell" on Cornelius' household (Acts 10:44). Shall we, therefore, conclude that falling is a "mode of baptism"?

A *mode* is a manner or method of doing something. Lexicons all agree that the verb *baptize* means to immerse, dip, plunge. Pouring is no more a mode of immersing than crawling is a mode of walking. They are two different actions! The various expressions used to describe the events of Pentecost picture it from different perspectives.



God was the source of power, the Spirit was the channel of it, and apostles were the recipients of it; hence, God poured, the Spirit fell, and the apostles were immersed [baptized] in divine power.

2. *When Jesus was baptized the Holy Spirit came down from above and appeared on His head. "Surely the water, the outward type of the Holy Spirit, should be poured."*

The Bible nowhere says the water of baptism is a type of the Holy Spirit. It does say the Spirit descended on Jesus **after** He was baptized (Matthew 4:16). These were two separate events. And note that the verse also says Jesus "went up out of the water" (NIV), the water in which He was immersed.

3. *"Baptism by pouring... is suitable under any circumstances. It requires no special vessels or bodies of water, and can be administered to the infirm or aged in the setting of the home or hospital when attendance at a designated place would be difficult or impossible."*

Someone forgot to tell John the Baptizer about this. John "was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and they were coming and being baptized" (John 3:23). What John did required **much** water. That is why he chose this site. He knew nothing of the advantages of portable pouring. This convenience argument is reminiscent ▶

of Jeroboam’s handier worship centers, which God unmistakably rejected (1 Kings 13).

4. *Baptism by pouring is in harmony with 1 John 5:8. “And there are three that bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.” Since the Spirit was poured and the blood and water from the Savior’s side was an outpouring, baptism should be, too, else these would not agree.*

The agreement of the Spirit, the water, and the blood is in their testimony about Jesus. The reference is apparently to evidence of Jesus’ identity associated with His baptism, His crucifixion, and the Spirit’s work. These together constitute the witness of God concerning His Son (v. 9). Our baptism is nowhere in view in this passage.

There is not a single case of pouring in place of immersion in all the New Testament. Baptism is a burial (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12). See it illustrated in Acts 8:38-39. “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” ■

# The Problem of Division

by Frank Himmel

1 Corinthians indicates that Corinth was a divided church.

**They were divided with reference to preachers.** Some said, “I am of Paul,” others said, “I am of Apollos,” others said, “I am of Cephas,” and some said “I am of Christ” (1:12). This may have been simply a matter of personal preference. Since Paul goes on to thank God that he personally baptized few of these brethren, their preferences were possibly rooted in who converted whom.

**They were divided economically.** Paul began his rebuke of their Lord’s Supper observance, “For in the first place, when you come together, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it” (11:18). This division might have been related to their preacher preferences, but the manifestation here was, some ate and drank to excess while others went hungry. That points to economic disparity. “Do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing?,” asked the Apostle.

**They were divided with reference to miraculous gifts.** Chapters 12-14 indicate that those who had the gift of speaking in tongues felt superior to those with other gifts. Perhaps those who had no gift at all felt completely left out. Paul reminded them that in the body of Christ, as in the human body, we are to be “giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, so that there be no division in the body, but that members may have the same care for one another” (12:25).

Let’s not allow attitudes and circumstances to divide us. Let’s work to “be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1:10). ■



## Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	Greg Winget	David Gray
SONG LEADER	Carlos Garcia	John Baucom
OPENING PRAYER	Steven Turner	
LORD’S SUPPER		
BREAD	Gary Hagler	
CUP	Mike Zachry	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Josh Baucom	
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Howard Moore
CLOSING PRAYER	Albert Lee Harrison	Adam Wilson