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**The theology of the Charismatic Movement in Britain from 1964 to the present day.**

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THE THEOLOGY OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN FROM 1964 TO THE  
PRESENT DAY.

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Ph.D. Thesis  
University of Wales  
1983

"I love the Lord, because He has heard my voice and my supplications.  
Because He inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call on him as  
long as I live."

Psalm 116. vv.1-2.

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SUMMARY

The Charismatic Movement developed in Britain in the early nineteen-sixties, characterised by an emphasis upon tangible experience of the action of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian believer. It centred around a 'baptism in the Spirit', by means of which the Holy Spirit was understood to enter into the individual in a new and powerful way, often accompanied by physical manifestations, and the exercise of one or several of the charismatic gifts listed in 1 Corinthians chapter twelve verses 8 - 10, especially speaking in tongues. This emphasis had already occurred early in this century, and had rapidly developed into the separate denomination of Classical Pentecostalism. However, the Charismatic Movement was distinctive in that its exponents remained firmly within their denominations, and the movement became very influential within both Protestant and Catholic traditions. Not until the development of the House Church Movement in the nineteen-seventies was there any large-scale exodus of 'charismatics' from the established denominations, but so strong had been its impact in the denominations by this time that the influence of the movement was firmly established.

It was in nineteen-sixty-four that the Fountain Trust was started, an organization which provided the first mouthpiece of the movement and played an important role in the formulation of early theology. That year is therefore taken as the starting point for this thesis, which examines the theology produced within the Charismatic Movement and its off-shoot, the House Church Movement. As the Charismatic Movement spread, so different groupings and organizations came into being and the theology developed and diversified. The majority of participants in the Charismatic Movement believe that their particular theology constitutes the most correct understanding of biblical teaching, and in areas where controversy has arisen, this biblical basis is examined and the different theologies compared with each other.

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Chapter 1.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT: PART 1

Since its appearance in Britain in the early nineteen-sixties, the Charismatic Movement, or Neo-Pentecostalism, has made its presence felt in most areas of the country. Vast numbers of Christians have been influenced by the movement, and have found their Christian faith and experience transformed by the new depth and reality which they have encountered. Other people have embraced Christianity for the first time after contact with people involved in the movement, whose lives and testimonies show such dramatic evidence of the reality of a personal God. Few committed Christians will not have been affected in some way by the Charismatic Movement. This may be a result of contact with adherents or with the mass of popular literature they have produced, through interest in the detailed theological debate which has ensued, or by means of the effects of charismatic experience, doctrine and practice within their own or neighbouring churches. Whether their reaction is one of eager enthusiasm, of a more detached interest, of wariness and caution, or even of great hostility on personal and doctrinal grounds, very few Christians remain unaware of the Charismatic Movement and of the important theological issues which it raises.

The Charismatic Movement is often also referred to as the 'Charismatic Renewal', particularly within Catholic circles, and these two terms are interchangeable. Preference is often expressed for the latter because it gives clearer expression to the essentially practical and personal nature of what is involved. For Catholics it is particularly appropriate, because they believe that the experience involves a renewal and actualization of what a person has already received at their baptism. The word 'charismatic' is not to be confused with the popular usage of the word in modern English to denote a person with a personality and aura about them which inspires devotion and enthusiasm in others. In the context with which this thesis is concerned, the word is from the greek noun  $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\mu\alpha$ , which means a gift of grace, or free gift, and is the word used by Paul in 1 Cor ch.12 v.4 with reference to the spiritual gifts



which he goes on to list<sup>1</sup>. The phenomenon now known as the Charismatic Movement is the new emphasis upon and experience of these gifts of the Holy Spirit which began in the established denominational churches in the early nineteen-sixties. Along with this emphasis upon the gifts of the Spirit is a stress upon a definite, tangible experience of a 'baptism in the Spirit', such as is recorded, for example, in Acts ch.8 vv.14-17 and Acts ch.10 vv.44-46. This experience is extremely important to participants in the Charismatic Movement. It is presented as an experience of infilling and empowering by the Holy Spirit which transforms a Christian's life, and indeed it is generally experienced as such. The participant in the Charismatic Movement thus finds that his Christian life becomes more meaningful and experiential. There is frequently a new awareness of the presence of God with the individual believer and of His interest in even the most minor details of day-to-day life<sup>2</sup>.

Particularly when baptism in the Spirit is followed by the regular personal exercise of one or several of the spiritual gifts, the individual becomes aware of a new power by means of which he is frequently able to overcome personal problems and difficulties. Many participants state that their charismatic experience has allowed the love of Christ to develop in them in a way which had not happened previously, and that they have thus become more outgoing and loving towards other people. Physical, mental, or emotional healing is another aspect that is frequently mentioned, as is a heightened consciousness of divine guidance and personal communication with God.

Such is the usual effect of the charismatic experience upon the individual. The effect which the Charismatic Movement has had upon the churches is more varied. Participants in the Movement have tended to be both exuberant and vocal, particularly in the earlier years, and this has sometimes turned other church-goers against them. Whether intentionally or otherwise, the impression has often been created that there are two classes

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1. See Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

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2. See chapter 5.

of Christians, the 'haves' and the 'have-nots', those who have known a charismatic experience and those who have not done so. This has provoked strong adverse reaction, not least on theological grounds. Many churches have known serious divisiveness between participants and non-participants, and sometimes this has reached the point where one party or the other has left to join another church which is more amenable to their viewpoint, or even to form an entirely new church altogether. Numerous other churches, however, have weathered such storms, and others have not known them at all, but have embarked corporately upon a search for renewal and have allowed charismatic experience and practice to find its place in their church life. One finds entire churches which have been charismatically renewed to the satisfaction of everybody concerned and to the benefit of the church's work and witness. It is often the case that non-Christians feel particularly drawn to such churches because of the spiritual reality, love and vitality that they find there, and for many people this has opened the way to personal conviction and Christian commitment. The sphere of liturgy and worship is one in which the Charismatic Movement has particularly left its mark, and few Christians will not have used some of the many songs and choruses produced within the Charismatic Movement and now used widely by many churches. Spontaneity in worship and the use of dance and drama in worship and evangelism are other aspects which originated in the movement but are now increasingly permeating the Church as a whole.

A Development in the Protestant tradition.

The phenomenon now known as the Charismatic Movement first received publicity in America in the Episcopalian Church in Van Nuys, California, in 1959-1960<sup>3</sup>. The minister of the church, Dennis Bennett, underwent a baptism in the Spirit and speaking in tongues experience, and this caused such controversy that he had no choice but to resign. However, the experience spread throughout the church, appeared in others, and sprang up simultaneously all over the world. Within Britain, very little happened in

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3. For a full account of this, see Dennis Bennett: Nine O'Clock in the Morning. Kingsway. 1971.

In 1965, he assessed the situation as follows:

"At the time of writing over a hundred ministers of all denominations in Britain have had this experience, and of that number only two are known to have lost their appointments as a result of this issue. The movement is staying firmly within the churches and many hundreds of lay people are being led into blessing too. There has been friction and some division in a few churches, mainly caused by misplaced zeal on the one hand and ignorance and fear on the other. On the whole there has been a remarkable growth in spiritual ministry among those groups which have developed in the churches. In the Anglican Church there has been as much interest among Anglo-Catholics as among Evangelicals." <sup>7</sup>

The Charismatic Movement was thus becoming firmly established. Harper was instrumental in the founding of the Fountain Trust in 1964, the purpose of this organization being to arrange conferences, meetings and days of renewal to provide information and teaching on the Charismatic Movement, and to encourage Christians to seek the experience of a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit. During the sixties and early seventies the Trust formed the spear-head of the movement within the British Isles (as well as exercising considerable influence abroad) and its magazine Renewal and the supplement Theological Renewal became the voice of the movement and the dispenser of information and teaching<sup>8</sup>. The Fountain Trust has been an inter-denominational organization, which has worked to keep the Charismatic

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6. Michael Harper: Power for the Body of Christ. Fountain Trust. 1964. pp.12,53.

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7. Michael Harper: As At The Beginning. Hodder and Stoughton. 1965. p.88.

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8. Since the closure of the Fountain Trust, Renewal has been published by Edward England, and Michael Harper has returned to the editorial chair. Theological Renewal is now published by Grove Books, under the direction of Colin Buchanan.

spite of reports of the new Charismatic Movement in America. But then, in 1962, a number of people throughout Britain entered into a charismatic experience. There seems to have been no link between them other than that they were all influenced in some way by the American events, and the publication Trinity magazine, edited by Mrs Jean Stone of Van Nuys, can be pinpointed as a particular source of information for some of these people. Amongst them was an Anglican curate called Michael Harper, who was on the staff team led by John Stott at All Souls, Langham Place, London<sup>4</sup>. Harper soon became a leader and spokesman for the Charismatic Movement and has remained so to this day. He believes that until the sixties the climate of opinion in Britain was against such a movement, largely because of bad feeling against the Pentecostal denominations, which are weaker in Britain than in America<sup>5</sup>. However, from 1962 onwards there was a steady increase in interest and support, and in 1964, Harper was able to write:

"In the last few years there have been clear signs of a renewing of the Church by the Holy Spirit, and increasing numbers of people have entered into a new experience of the Holy Spirit's power ... In the last few years we have known of thousands of Christians receiving this promised power. They have known some power in their lives before. They have known about the Holy Spirit - but had little experience of Him. They had drunk from the waters of life - but have never been deluged in the same waters. It has been thrilling to see person after person receive this promise by faith, and discover Christ is the same today as He was on the day of Pentecost, and gives the same gift with the same manifestations."<sup>6</sup>

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4. A detailed account of Harper's personal charismatic experience, the spread of the Charismatic Movement as he became aware of it, and the founding and development of the Fountain Trust can be found in Michael Harper: None Can Guess. Hodder and Stoughton. 1971.

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5. Michael Harper: As At The Beginning. Hodder and Stoughton, 1965. p.84.

Movement within the denominational structures and has urged participants to remain within their churches. Tom Smail, who succeeded Harper as Director of the Fountain Trust and editor of Renewal, clearly stated the position of the Trust with regard to the local church:

"This magazine and the ministry it represents are not concerned with something called the Charismatic Movement, if that means something apart from the life and fellowship of the local church. We are not in business to see the emergence of holy huddles, but to see the bringing to life of the people of God."<sup>9</sup>

This position has constantly been reiterated in Fountain Trust publications.

The Charismatic Movement is commonly thought to have 'come-of-age' at its Guildford International Conference in July 1971 and to have started out on a new period of maturity. Harper lists four features which he felt were present at Guildford and central to the Charismatic Movement: it is international, ecumenical, of a unifying character, and didactic<sup>10</sup>. In 1977 and 1979 respectively, Bob Gordon and David Phypers attempted to list definitive features of the Movement. Gordon described it as experiential; evangelical (in that it emphasised the whole of the gospel and the fullness of God's grace); ecumenical; eucharistic (in the sense of expressing thanksgiving in praise, worship and service); and eschatological (in encouraging faith and hope to anticipate the future that belongs to God). He points out that the word 'movement' only makes sense with reference to the Charismatic Movement if what is meant by it is "a working of God's spirit in and among God's people"<sup>11</sup>. Phypers notes the importance within

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9. Tom Smail: Editorial. Renewal No. 66. Dec/Jan. 1976. p.3.

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10. Michael Harper: "The Coming of Age". Renewal No.34. Sept.1976. pp.2-4.

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11. Robert Gordon: "The charismatic renewal: what is it now?" Renewal No.70. Aug/Sept 1977. pp.13-16.

the Movement of the personal relationship of the believer to God, an interest in and study of the theology of the Holy Spirit, and a rediscovery of the doctrine of the Church and the practical application of this in church life at all levels<sup>12</sup>.

Whereas the American Charismatic Movement has tended to coalesce around para-church structures, the movement in Britain was, until the mid-seventies, principally within existing churches. This has been largely due to the fact that the Fountain Trust always eschewed para-church developments, and did not support either the leaving of churches or the formation of new charismatic churches. Harper comments that this commitment to the Church, and the belief that it can be renewed by the Spirit, contrasts favourably with the largely pessimistic attitude of American charismatics towards institutional Christianity in general and denominational Churches in particular<sup>13</sup>. The Fountain Trust wanted to see the Charismatic Movement integrated into all churches and it dissolved itself at the end of 1980, believing that the purpose for which God had called it into being had been fulfilled and its work completed. By this time, each of the major denominations had developed their own means of co-ordinating the Charismatic Movement within them and providing information centres.

The Group for Evangelism and Renewal within the United Reformed Church (GEAR) was founded in early 1974. It took the form of a small group of ten people who sought to promote evangelism and renewal in the church, and to organize conferences and meetings where United Reformed Church members who shared these concerns could find teaching and fellowship. There is no formal membership of GEAR as an organization, but adherents meet together at national and regional conferences. In addition, a thrice-yearly Broadsheet is printed, consisting of news of evangelism and renewal in

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12. David Phypers: "Charismatic renewal: where are we now?" Renewal No.83. Oct/Nov 1979. pp.28-30.

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13. Michael Harper: This Is The Day. Hodder and Stoughton. 1979. p.35.

local churches, teaching, testimonies and reviews. GEAR monographs are also published and GEAR considers itself to have played an important part in the publication of Include Us In<sup>14</sup>, a booklet produced by evangelicals in the major denominations arguing the case for remaining in the churches rather than leaving to join independent or house churches. GEAR describes one of its functions as acting as a pressure group within the denominations for evangelical theology, and people known to be sympathetic to the aims of GEAR are often invited onto the main committees of the United Reformed Church to provide an evangelical presence and viewpoint. Upwards of two thousand people are on the mailing list for the GEAR Broadsheet and this gives an indication of the extent of interest in the Charismatic Movement amongst United Reformed Church members.

The newsletter Anglicans For Renewal links together Anglicans who are involved in the Charismatic Movement, and provides teaching, reviews, and news from the Anglican communion and other churches. Anglican Days of Renewal have occurred frequently throughout Britain, and the charismatic prayer group is the local manifestation of the Charismatic Movement in Anglicanism. There can be no doubt that the Movement has had considerable influence throughout this denomination. Anglican participants acknowledge their debt to the Fountain Trust, and the newsletter comments:

"Members of the Church of England in particular have discovered new blessings and been enormously helped by the hundreds of conferences arranged over the years: the Trust's tapes and books have taught and inspired many Anglicans who have lacked guidance or encouragement in their own parishes. But times have changed and renewal has moved on from large ecumenical conferences and city centre meetings to smaller denominational gatherings and united praise services in our local churches." <sup>15</sup>

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14. Include Us in. Ark Publishing. 1980.

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15. "Farewell Fountain Trust - Whither the C of E?" Anglicans For Renewal No.4. Advent. 1980.

The passing of the Fountain Trust prompted consideration of the setting up of some kind of specific agency to serve charismatic renewal in the Church of England, and an air of expectation and optimism pervaded these plans:

"... The Fountain Trust has laid good foundations; as we bid it a fond farewell let us seek and pray to build on these foundations in such a way that God's Holy Spirit may sweep through the Church of England, and the other churches, renewing and reviving His people in preparation for the harvest that is to come. The 1980's hold great possibilities for spiritual revival in our land, and far from coming to an end we believe the renewal will grow and grow to God's greater glory in the years ahead. The best, in fact, is yet to come." <sup>16</sup>

The formation of Anglican Renewal Ministries was announced in the Autumn of 1981, and Lamplugh House, the Conference and Renewal Centre near Driffield, North Humberside, became ARM's information centre. The publication was anticipated of a course of instruction for personal renewal in the Holy Spirit for confirmation candidates and communicants, and this became available in early 1982<sup>17</sup>. In addition to this, conferences were planned for 1982 and 1983 at Swanwick, High Leigh, Scargill House, Lamplugh House, and Watcombe House conference centres. It is clear from the subjects of these conferences that the intention of ARM is to emphasize that charismatic renewal must be firmly rooted in the parishes, and that one of the major objectives of the Fountain Trust is thus maintained.

The Charismatic Movement in Methodism is served by Dunamis magazine, which is circulated to those people on its mailing list. It began its existence as a newsletter circulated to a small number of interested Methodists by two Methodist ministers who had experienced charismatic

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16. *ibid.*

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17. John Finney and Felicity Lawson: Saints Alive!. Anglican Renewal Ministries. 1982.



renewal. As demand grew, it became a quarterly magazine, and it consists of the familiar formula of news, reviews and teaching. Although the Charismatic Movement has made less of an impact in Methodism than in Anglicanism, the Methodists are very conscious of their historical links with Wesleyanism and the Holiness tradition from which Classical Pentecostalism developed<sup>18</sup>. They therefore consider that the development of the Charismatic Movement in their denomination is a natural one. The Methodists too are considering the possibility of a more organised structure in the form of the projected Dunamis Renewal Fellowship. The passing of the Fountain Trust has clearly left a void, and there is widespread feeling that some degree of denominational structuring is now necessary to serve the Charismatic Movement in the individual denominations.

Baptist participants in the Charismatic Movement have less clearly defined links. Baptists For Life and Growth provide information on Baptist churches where the movement has been in evidence, but they have no periodical concerned with it, nor at the moment are there any organised gatherings exclusively for Baptists. They participate in conferences and activities arranged by the other groups and presumably feel no need at present for a more clear-cut Baptist network.

Over the years, certain names and places have become widely known as a result of their involvement in the Charismatic Movement. The Fountain Trust's successive directors, Michael Harper, Tom Smail, and Michael Barling, have been well-known as speakers, and Harper's books have had considerable influence. David Watson and the Anglican Church of St-Michael-le-Belfry in York have also been widely known for participation and leadership in the Movement, as have Colin Urquhart and St. Hugh's parish church in Luton. Both these men have written influential books which have claimed a wide readership. Two books which are particularly noteworthy for their impact in the nineteen-sixties are Nine O' Clock in

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18. See for example, "John Wesley's Charismatic Ministry". Dunamis. No.33. Oct.1980. pp.14-17; "The President speaks ... about the Charismatic Movement and Methodism". Dunamis. No.27. April 1979. pp.4-6.

the Morning by Dennis Bennett<sup>19</sup> and The Cross and the Switchblade<sup>20</sup> by David Wilkerson. The former describes one of the initial manifestations of the Charismatic Movement in America, whilst the latter describes the work of a Classical Pentecostal minister amongst teenage gang members and drug addicts in New York in the nineteen-fifties, and the conversion and instant withdrawal from drugs that resulted from their direct experience of the Holy Spirit. Both these books achieved a massive circulation, and are named by many participants in the movement as providing the initial stimulus to their personal enquiry into the charismatic phenomena. More recently, a British book similar to The Cross and the Switchblade has raised the charismatic issue all over again, and has promoted further enquiry from people not yet involved in the movement. This is Chasing The Dragon by Jackie Pullinger<sup>21</sup>, which describes work amongst gangsters and drug addicts in Hong Kong's Walled City, and charts similar results of the effect of the baptism in the Spirit to those recorded by Wilkerson ten years previously.

Two organizations which have spread the doctrines of the Charismatic Movement are the Crusade For World Revival, based in Walton-on-Thames, and the Good News Crusade, based in St. Austell, Cornwall. CWR has been influential through its "Life in the Spirit" seminars, the daily "Every Day With Jesus" readings, and its newsletter, Revival. The Good News Crusade has a mainly evangelistic thrust and the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the ministry of healing are particularly mentioned at evangelistic meetings. In addition to such organizations, there are less well-known groups with specialised interests, such as Caring Professions Seminars (CPS), which seek to stimulate interest in divine healing amongst those in the medical professions.

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19. op.cit. 3.

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20. David Wilkerson: The Cross and the Switchblade. Lakeland. 1963.

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21. Jackie Pullinger. Chasing The Dragon. Hodder and Stoughton. 1980.

The development of Christian communities has been a notable feature of the Charismatic Movement over the years. The concept of the 'extended family' or 'extended household' was put into practice in the nineteen-sixties. It consisted of a nucleus family whose home was shared by numerous other families or individuals, who pooled their money and sometimes their possessions so that they functioned as a single economic unit. The distinctive lifestyle that resulted was intended to reflect that of the New Testament Christians who held all things in common, and it allowed exploration of corporate worship and spiritual sharing. Many 'charismatic' churches have adopted this practice, and extended households can be found throughout Britain. A development of the concept has been the establishment of actual Christian communities, and the "Fisherfolk" have been particularly influential in this area. The original Fisherfolk team came over to Britain from the charismatically-renewed Church of the Redeemer, Houston, Texas, and since then there have been several Fisherfolk teams. They regard the chief focus of their ministry to be the drawing of Christians into a vital experience of worship, and continue to produce records, books, kits and study courses to this end. There are Fisherfolk communities in several countries, and two exist in Britain, the Community of Celebration at the Isle of Cumbrae, Scotland<sup>22</sup>, and the Post Green Community in Dorset<sup>23</sup>. The Post Green Community describe three aspects of their ministry. Firstly, they provide general teaching about renewal through Celebration Services Limited, which is a joint venture of Post Green and the Community of Celebration. Secondly, more specialised teaching, particularly on the corporate dimension of renewal, is provided by means of conferences, camps, guest facilities, and a limited number of visits to individual parishes. Then thirdly there is deeper involvement in the lives of individuals, who may come to the community for short or long periods of time, or who may have invited the community to share with them

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22. For a descriptive article about this community, see Crusade magazine, March 1980. pp.28-30.

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23. I am grateful to the Community Administrator of Post Green for providing me with the following information.

in their local situation.

Although some households consist of single families only, the majority contain both families and single people coming from many different backgrounds, cultures and countries. The community supports itself from the salaries of members who are employed and the income it receives from its own businesses, which, as well as Celebration Services, include a Garage, a Post Office and Store, and a touring caravan and camping site. Outside financial support is, however, necessary for the expenses of ministry and this is forthcoming from Christians who receive Post Green's quarterly newsletter and prayer calendar. Post Green also published the magazine Towards Renewal, which focussed attention upon community aspects of charismatic renewal. At the end of 1981, this was replaced by GrassRoots magazine, which lays particular emphasis upon Christian growth. Another large community is the Bethany Fellowship, near Haywards Heath, Sussex, which is directed by Colin Urquhart and is now the base for Michael Harper. The same basic pattern of organization is found here as at Post Green, a particular emphasis of this community being its free cassette tape ministry and its eight-member evangelistic teams, which conduct missions all over Britain<sup>24</sup>.

Other communities which developed within the Charismatic Movement exist on a smaller scale throughout Britain, and are usually fully involved in the local church and regard themselves as a part of it. However, a significant development occurred in the early nineteen-seventies with the emergence of what have come to be known as the house churches. These consist of people who have left the denominations and set up new churches or fellowships, with the initial tendency to meet in homes. By 1975 the house churches were rapidly increasing in number as more and more people left their denominational churches, and it became apparent that what the Fountain Trust had been working to prevent was beginning to happen on a large scale. The House Church Movement has developed out of the Charismatic Movement and is a continuation of it, although many house

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24. See article "House of God is where the spirit moves you". The Guardian. 7th Sept. 1981.

church members express reluctance to be identified with the latter. This is because they feel that it has been so hindered by denominational structures and tradition that God has left the denominational Charismatic Movement and is continuing His purposes through the house churches.

The House Church Movement is developing all the time and is a complex phenomenon. Up to nine streams have been delineated by different people, and the situation changes repeatedly. But two major streams have become firmly established, and necessitate comment. The "Bradford Circle" is led by Bryn Jones, who is based in that city but travels widely in Britain and America. These groups are found all over Britain, are associated with Dales Bible Week and the South Downs Bible Week, and are linked together by Restoration magazine. The Bradford Church itself began in October 1975 when three churches merged to form a nucleus. The first of these was a group who had felt forced out of their Open Brethren church over the issue of the Holy Spirit. The second was a house group - the Clayton Road Fellowship - which was composed of people who had felt squeezed out of denominational churches because of the same issue, and the third was a group from Wally North's New Covenant Fellowship. Contact between these three groups grew, and friendship developed between the leaders. The concept of the ministries of Eph.ch.4.v.11, especially those of apostle and prophet, became a central issue, and Bryn Jones, the leader of the Clayton Road Fellowship, was asked to take on an apostolic role. This was to be an executive role, and not just advisory. The circumstantial factor had arisen that all three churches needed new premises, and Bryn Jones suggested to all three that they should consider whether God wanted them to be one church instead of three separate ones. Different traditions and emphases were involved, but after many months of prayer the three became one. A theatre in the city centre was hired each Sunday for worship, praise and Scriptural teaching, and in 1976 the present premises were acquired in the form of the former Anglican diocesan headquarters. Since then, groups have sprung up all over Britain which have placed themselves under the authority of the Bradford leaders, and thus the "Bradford Circle" has developed. Their fairly authoritarian structure has aroused considerable criticism, and many other house churches feel that the Bradford Circle tends towards exclusivism. Denominational churches often claim that 'the Bradford people' are responsible for schism, encouraging

people to leave their churches and join with 'Bradford' folk. Nevertheless, these groups are the biggest and most successful in terms of numbers and influence. There is a strong 'apostolic' ministry, consisting of a network of 'apostles' who work in their geographical areas, overseeing existing groups and establishing new ones. In general, they prefer only their own speakers to speak in their churches and fellowships.

Secondly, there is the "Fullness Circle", so-called because for several years it produced Fullness magazine, now replaced by Dovetail. It is a loose federation of fellowships based on longstanding personal friendships between leaders. The Fullness Circle consists of many fellowships groups, perhaps the most influential and well-known of which are the Cobham Fellowship and the Romford Fellowship, with their respective leaders, Gerald Coates and John Noble. The purpose of these fellowships is to build communities which will follow where God leads and in which the members relate closely with each other, expressing their Christian commitment in definite and practical ways. The structure is less authoritarian than that of the Bradford Circle, and there is often an aversion to organization and planned programmes. Frequently, this seems to become an obsession, and meetings will be changed simply for the sake of change and to relieve anxiety that the group is becoming bound by structures. Members express a fear of being tied down by structures and systems; they feel that this characterises the denominational churches which they have left, and are concerned lest they too become enslaved by a system. For this reason, 'flexibility' remains the keyword. The majority of people who have joined groups connected with the Fullness Circle after leaving other churches have done so because of disillusionment and a desire for 'something more'. Unreality, a lack or absence of practical Christianity in day-to-day life, a yearning for deeper fellowship and commitment, and aversion to "the Sunday only business" are most frequently cited as reasons for this disillusionment. Whereas Christianity had seemed to show a credibility gap between what was said and what was done, once involved in the Fullness Circle, people claimed to find themselves more able to bridge it. Thus many people have actually moved house and job with the express purpose of joining a fellowship in a different area, and this has been markedly so with respect to the Cobham Fellowship. One person described their experience as follows:

"We liked what we saw and moved six months later. We wanted to go to Cobham because that's where God is. I can't imagine where we'd be otherwise. ... We've had opportunity to grow." <sup>25</sup>

This statement clearly illustrates the awareness of the immediacy of God's presence and activity which characterises the Fullness Circle. Flexibility and openness to change remain central; they seek to be open to God's guidance and believe in "more walk than talk". They usually prefer to talk in terms of conforming to God's leading in the present rather than formulating long-term aims, and they feel that more specific aims may come into being at, and for, particular periods in time. It is important to communicate a Christian style of life, and this in itself is understood as an ongoing thing. The fellowships connected with Fullness are eager to explore new ideas in worship, lifestyle, and communication, and their attitude here is summed up by the following remark:

"The last words of a dying church are: 'But we have never done it this way before'." <sup>26</sup>

The annual Kingdom Life week is organized by the Cobham Fellowship each September, and consists of meetings and seminars in which teaching and instruction are provided by Fullness Circle leaders and visiting speakers. There is emphasis upon keeping up with God's on-going purposes; deep Christian relationships; use of the arts media; the 'prophetic' ministry and its place today; healing; and baptism in the Spirit. Kingdom Life is widely publicised by advertisements in Christian periodicals, and many hundreds of people from all over Britain attend the meetings, and camp there for the week. The Cobham and Romford Fellowships have toured Britain with the "Bind Us Together" production, which has used modern media to communicate the realities of the Christian life.

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25. Interview with members of the Cobham Fellowship. July 1980.

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26. *ibid.*

The Fullness Circle and the Bradford Circle have gone their separate ways. Friendships between some of their respective leaders continue, but one feels that these may be maintained under a certain amount of pressure. Clear differences in emphases have emerged, and there is no prospect of a merging of these two streams, nor indeed would they wish for one. Fullness magazine is portrayed as a 'prophetic' rather than a 'teaching' magazine in that it seeks to relate its teaching to the contemporary situation. It would be difficult to fit much from Fullness into the institutional church, whereas in spite of its exclusivism and more hard-line rejection of denominational churches, much from Restoration magazine could be. This is basically because of the different attitudes to structures expressed by the two: the Bradford Circle has its own efficient structure, which is not unlike that of the more traditional churches. The Fullness Circle at first appears more radical than the Bradford Circle. However, the sheer unconventionality of the Fullness Circle is something which makes an immediate impression, and the Bradford Circle is probably no less radical, but is simply less obtrusive about it. The Fullness Circle seems more radical because it is more openly reactionary against the practices of the established churches, and in its early days it acquired an image akin to that of rebellious youth.

The origins of the Bradford Church are noteworthy in that they typify the main types of people who have formed the House Church Movement, namely, those who have left the Brethren because of the baptism in the Spirit issue, others who have left denominational churches for similar reasons, and those already involved in a house group which has lost direction through inadequate leadership or general spiritual immaturity. Many of the leaders of the Fullness Circle themselves came out of the Brethren in the early 1970s, and found that it was several years before vast numbers of other people joined them. It should be stressed that Fullness and Restoration magazines are both subscribed to by members of denominational churches who have decided to stay where they are, and Restoration is frequently on sale in Christian bookshops, although Fullness is circulated mainly by means of a mailing list. Circulation of their literature and the impact of Kingdom Life and the Dales and South Downs Bible Weeks mean that the Fullness and Bradford Circles influence a considerable proportion of denominational Christians. Presumably, many of the latter find no conflict



between embracing such teaching and remaining in their churches. However, vast numbers have in fact left in recent years in order to join a group directly linked with Fullness or Bradford.

Another stream in the House Church Movement consists of the proliferation of house groups all over Britain which look to the Chard Church in Somerset for the leadership of Sid Purse, Vic Dunning and Ian Andrews. The Chard community has not grown out of the Charismatic Movement, but has existed for twenty years and developed alongside it. Healing, deliverance, demonology, and the gifts of the Spirit have been noteworthy emphases here, and this stream tends to be very exclusive, meetings usually only being addressed by Chard people and associates. A fourth stream is made up of churches led by Pastor Wally North, and is commonly referred to as "The Great North Circular". Wally North bases his doctrine upon Holiness teaching and that of men such as Wesley and Finney. The groups involved tend to be suspicious of outsiders and are the most exclusive of all, believing that they alone constitute the Bride of Christ and that the institutional church is forsaken by God. These groups therefore only associate with those of their own circle and are closed off from outside influence. In addition to these 'circles' there are multitudes of local fellowships all over Britain which are independent, linked to no one, and open to more or less everyone.

The House Church Movement is therefore very diverse, and there are certain problems over terminology. For example, distinctions between house churches (or fellowships) and exclusive communities have been considerably blurred: people understand and use the terms differently, and confusion and misunderstanding result. The Fullness Circle emphasises the community aspect, but they do not regard themselves as exclusive and are open to outside influence. Consequently, they cannot be grouped with communities such as Chard. The groups for which "community is 'it'" tend to be the more extreme and exclusive ones because their emphasis turns them in upon themselves and makes them insular. These groups could perhaps be more aptly described as communes than as communities. The Bugbrooke group in Northamptonshire, which began in 1973 and now numbers several hundred people, is an example of such a group. Everything material is shared, there is a rigid disciplinarian approach, and no outside involvement<sup>27</sup>.

Often complex and hard to categorize, the house churches are probably the most noticeable phenomenon of the church scene in Britain today. This has resulted in fresh attention being focussed on the Charismatic Movement from which they have developed and which they now form an increasingly distinct part of.

#### B Development in the Catholic Tradition

Events in America marked the beginnings of the Charismatic Movement, or Charismatic Renewal as it is usually called in Catholicism<sup>28</sup>. It was in February 1967 that twenty staff and students at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh experienced a profound religious transformation in their lives, marked by real, personal contact with Christ and by charismatic activity like that known in the early church. The group at Duquesne had contact with people at the nearby University of Notre Dame, and news of the occurrence soon arrived there. Within a month, this experience had spread to Notre Dame and to the Catholic student parish of Michigan State University, and from these three centres it spread so rapidly that people were soon speaking of a "Pentecostal Movement" in the Catholic Church. Meanwhile, there were similar developments as far apart as Boston, Florida, Seattle and Los Angeles. Edward O'Connor points out that these arose independently, and that although they originated at about the same time as that at Duquesne, some of them were definitely previous to it. The French theologian, Rene Laurentin, agrees with this:

"It was like a series of independent explosions, rather than a spreading out from a centre, because other people in other places

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27. See article "Bugbrooke's Controversial Community". Buzz magazine, Aug. 1980, and ensuing correspondence, Buzz, Oct. 1980.

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28. First-hand accounts of these are provided by Edward O'Connor: The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church. Ava Maria Press. 1971; and Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan: Catholic Pentecostals. Paulist Press. 1969.

were engaged in the same search for God." 29

Gerard Noel, in his assessment of contemporary Catholicism in 1980, looked back over the development of Charismatic Renewal:

"Such happenings could well be accounted for by some such explanation as self-hypnosis or group hysteria. The sequel, however, is what is important, since the Duquesne experience proved to be no isolated or freakish occurrence. The movement, in fact, despite lack of leadership, or organization, spread very rapidly ... Catholic Charismatic Renewal is now worldwide and numbers some millions of adherents. It is easily the most significant phenomenon in the Roman Catholic Church of today." 30  
(my italics)

The development of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Britain is most accurately charted by the material contained in the Newsletter of the National Service Committee for Charismatic Renewal, which later developed into the circular Goodnews. The earliest available copies of the Newsletter date from May 1973. Goodnews first appeared in December 1975 and continues to be circulated. In January 1975 it was noted that the beginning of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Britain probably dates to early 1970; as far as is known, this was the first time that a group of Catholics came together with the Renewal in mind<sup>31</sup>. In the early

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29. Rene Laurentin: Catholic Pentecostalism. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1977. p.4.

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30. Gerard Noel: The Anatomy of the Catholic Church. Hodder and Stoughton. 1980. p.73.

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31. Newsletter. Jan.1975.

seventies, news of the Charismatic Renewal spread by word of mouth and by books such as The Cross and the Switchblade (David Wilkerson), The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church (Edward O'Connor), Catholic Pentecostals (Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan), and Baptized in the Spirit (Steve Clark). Local prayer meetings developed as the main vehicle of the Renewal. These had not been usual in the Catholic Church for a long time, and they introduced informal, spontaneous prayer, bringing a new awareness of the closeness and accessibility of God. They provided an environment in which the charismatic gifts could be exercised, and in which people could be prayed over to receive the Baptism in the Spirit. Perhaps the majority of people now involved in the Renewal first came into contact with it through the individual prayer meetings. Mention must also be made of the 'Life in the Spirit' seminars, which are for many people the means of initiation into baptism in the Spirit. The seminars were developed by the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in America and are used widely in Britain, with the help of a detailed manual. Individual prayer groups frequently run 'Life in the Spirit' seminar courses with the aim of establishing or deepening people's relationships with Christ, assisting them to yield to the Holy Spirit, and encouraging their growth in the Christian community and their contribution to it. Local 'Day of Renewal' conferences have been a feature of the Charismatic Movement from the start. They were usually organized by local prayer groups and are not so numerous now that the Renewal is more firmly established. A typical Day of Renewal consisted of talks by a visiting speaker, prayer (including prayer for baptism in the Spirit), a pooled lunch, and a eucharistic celebration at the end of the day. The early issues of the Newsletter are full of reports concerning Days of Renewal in different areas, and Protestant participants in the Charismatic Renewal were very much in evidence as speakers in the early days<sup>32</sup>. But as the Catholic Renewal developed, Catholic participants were more able to step into this role. The Newsletter now began circulation, and a couple's London home became a centre for providing information about

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32. Michael Harper spoke at a London Day of Renewal in early 1973, David Watson at a Day of Renewal in March 1973, and Colin Urquhart at a Marylebone Day of Renewal in September 1973. These are reported in Newsletters of May 1973, April 1973 approx. (undated), and July 1973.

Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Britain. The National Service Committee for Catholic Charismatic Renewal in England and Wales (the NSC) was formed in October 1973. It arose because of a need for an organ of communication both between the various prayer groups and areas and with the bishops, the practical necessity of having someone to sponsor charismatic conferences, and the particular need for teaching and formation in leadership. Representatives from the different areas were chosen to serve on the newly-formed committee, which expressed no desire to claim any authority or control over the Renewal, but emphasised that it existed for practical purposes. The following year, the Committee was recommissioned and since then it has continued to meet regularly. The composition of the group is on a geographical basis and its members have not necessarily remained the same over the years. It is clear that the burden of being thrust forward into leadership has been considerable for them, and perhaps hard to reconcile with the hierarchical system of authority and leadership in Catholicism. They have experienced a certain hesitation and lack of confidence as they have felt their way along<sup>33</sup>. Yearly conferences were organized to help to ensure correct teaching, but the Renewal spread so rapidly that the demand for conferences became impossible to meet. It was also realised that conferences were inadequate, frequently failing to convey a complete picture of the Renewal, consequently resulting in the spread of inaccurate information, such as the misapprehension that prayer meetings were in themselves the essence of the Renewal rather than simply the vehicle through which renewal often arrived. In 1976, therefore, regional conferences began to appear, and much of the burden was removed from the NSC as Diocesan Service Committees came into being. Ian Petit, a member of the NSC and editor of Goodnews until mid-1978 describes the purpose of these as follows:

"These were formed so that in each diocese there would be a group of responsible people who could be available for the bishop to give him information and offer their services in any way, as well as keeping a loving eye on the renewal in that area so as to

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33. This is expressed by an NSC member in a taped talk: "Birth and Growth of the National Service Committee to date". Hopwood Hall. July 1976.

serve its growth and purity. The results have been varied; some working smoothly, others getting bogged down in organizational problems and identity crises, often disbanding." <sup>34</sup>

Petit felt at this time that the Renewal was "only scratching the surface" of the Church in Britain, and he regretted that so many people had identified the movement with prayer meetings and rejected it as not being for them:

"It is of the utmost importance to see the renewal we are involved in is the Renewal of the Church of Christ. Our object is not to spread prayer meetings as such, nor is it to fan into flame charismatic stars, nor is it to put on charismatic conferences or retreats, nor indeed, to found a movement - though clearly prayer meetings, leaders, conferences, retreats and some organization are valuable parts of the process - our object is to add nothing new to the Church of Jesus Christ, but to bring that Church into the fulness of its inheritance." <sup>35</sup> (his italics)

Leaders of the Charismatic Renewal repeatedly stress the importance of the participation of those involved in the parish as a whole, rather than just in the prayer groups. Francis Sullivan, an American Jesuit who has spoken widely in Britain, stated that a prayer group should think of itself as a service group, moving towards the parish of which it is a part. He is unhappy with the attitude that views the Charismatic Renewal as the one bright light in a black picture of the whole church. Rather than pointing to the hope of resurrecting a dead parish he stresses the positive role of service and the contribution of what the parish requires. He would like to see charismatic prayer groups becoming important in the catechetical field and in confirmation classes. People would not just then be coming to the group, but the group would be going to the Church <sup>36</sup>.

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34. Ian Petit: "Where are we?" Goodnews No.9. April/May 1977. pp.2-4.

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35. *ibid.*

In June 1976 came the news that Bishop Langton Fox of Menevia had been appointed by the bishops of England and Wales as the link man between the Episcopal Conference of bishops and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in England and Wales. His official title was 'The Ecclesiastical Assistant to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal', and Goodnews stated:

"This marks another milestone in the history of the renewal in this country." <sup>37</sup>

Bishop Fox is personally involved in the Renewal and believes that his appointment constituted a sign of approval of the Charismatic Renewal on the part of the Episcopal Conference. Many organizations within Catholicism are allocated a bishop as their 'Ecclesiastical Assistant', and this position is one of a liaison officer through whom the bishops communicate. Bishop Fox points out that the Episcopal Conference never appoint an Ecclesiastical Assistant to a movement unless they approve of it; although the bishops had been hesitant over what they considered to be American cultural baggage in the movement, they decided that the essentials of Charismatic Renewal were genuine<sup>38</sup>. Following the retirement of Bishop Fox in 1981, Bishop Victor Guazzelli became the new 'link-man' between the Charismatic Renewal and the bishops.

Another important development took place in the summer of 1979, when it was announced that the NSC had established a charitable trust to be known as the CREW Trust, an acronym from the full title of Catholic Charismatic Renewal in England and Wales. The London Information Office was in need of new premises and a full-time worker to cope with the

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36. Francis Sullivan: taped talk on Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Hawkstone Hall conference (undated).

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37. Goodnews. No.4. June 1976.

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38. Interview with Bishop Langton Fox. December 1980.

ever-increasing volume of work, and there were plans for a centre for healing and the possibility of employing people who would work for the Renewal. It was noted that in some countries the work of the Renewal was supported by communities, but that at present such communities did not exist in Britain. Tithing, and specific collections for the work of the NSC and the diocesan teams were also suggested. In the autumn of that year, the London Information Office was moved to rooms in a building adjacent to a parish church, a location which was felt to be particularly appropriate in view of the desire to be integrated into parish life.

Speaking generally about the growth of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Britain, Bishop Fox stated that it was "extraordinary" in the way in which it sprang up. Although its appearance was late in comparison with Classical Pentecostalism and charismatic phenomena in traditions such as Anglicanism and Methodism, it spread rapidly in the Catholic Church, which is characteristically conservative and generally prefers to do what others have already done, rather than leading the way. Bishop Fox stated that the response has been mainly amongst the laity: in most matters the clergy tend to wait and see what their bishop thinks, and such caution has characterised their attitude to Charismatic Renewal. The Renewal has spread upwards from the laity to the priests and to the bishops, although the bishops are still few. There has been, however, a gradual increase in the number of bishops attending meetings and conferences, and there has been growing friendliness towards the Renewal, less suspicion, and more conviction that it is genuinely of God. Although some clergy undoubtedly believe that Charismatic Renewal is of the devil, Bishop Fox estimated in 1980 that approximately one in ten of the clergy of England and Wales had been to conferences organized by the NSC or regional leaders. Moreover, roughly ten per cent of the clergy were committed to it. The published "Directory" of prayer meetings has grown enormously, and although the Renewal is not to be thought of solely in terms of prayer meetings, they are the best available indication of the life of Renewal amongst the people. There appears to be no available account of the history of Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Britain as a whole. It is generally assumed that there have been no marked differences in developments in England, Scotland and Wales. A fairly detailed account of the Renewal in Ireland was published in 1974, and this obviously concentrates upon early events<sup>37</sup>.



The author is a businessman, one of the co-ordinators of the Renewal in Dublin, and one of the Irish delegates at the First International Catholic Charismatic Leaders Conference in Rome in 1973. He recounts the beginnings in Northern and Southern Ireland, and once again the amount of contact with the Charismatic Renewal in America and the influence of this for both individuals and groups is noteworthy. The first Catholic charismatic in Northern Ireland became so through the agency of an Elim Pentecostal Church, but he only took the step of requesting prayer for baptism in the Spirit after hearing of events in America. Of the situation in Ireland, Flynn wrote:

"There are an increasing number who see the Charismatic Renewal as the only real long-term solution to the current hostility that exists in this sad province." <sup>40</sup>

Small pieces of information can be gleaned from Goodnews about the development of Charismatic Renewal in Scotland. The first Day of Renewal for Scottish Catholics took place near Perth on June 1st, 1974, and prayer groups had begun independently prior to this in Aberdeen, Perth and Edinburgh, one person from these having encountered Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the United States. Goodnews reported in the spring of 1977 that there were now twenty-five prayer groups in Scotland, spread throughout the region but more numerous in the west and in the east. A small Service Committee had been established in the west and had organized Days of Renewal<sup>41</sup>.

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39. Thomas Flynn: The Charismatic Renewal and the Irish Experience. Hodder and Stoughton. 1974.

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40. op.cit.39. p.19.

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41. Goodnews. No.9. April/May 1977.

It is clear that when men who are accustomed to following the directions of the hierarchy find themselves in the position of leaders, they feel a marked insecurity and uncertainty of direction. A current of uncertainty is apparent running through the development of the Renewal, and this is illustrated in one of Ian Petit's articles in Goodnews:

"If we could use the structure of the Church, we could reach many people - but the Church itself has a hard enough time trying to use its own structure - but as yet we've hardly touched the priests, and they make up a large part of the structure ... So clearly there is a call to lead - but where?"<sup>42</sup>

As the Catholic Charismatic Renewal has grown, so it has developed. A member of the NSC felt in 1980 that the Renewal was now moving beyond the experience of the baptism in the Spirit. Covenant communities such as the Word of God community in Ann Arbor, Michigan, had been the fruit of this in America, and he saw the beginnings of such a development in England<sup>43</sup>. This would parallel developments in the Charismatic Movement in Protestantism. Donal Dorr also detected a greater stress than previously on the religious development of Christians after they have been baptized in the Spirit, as opposed to making baptism in the Spirit the 'be-all-and-end-all' of Renewal:

"This is just one instance of elements of a more typically Catholic type of spirituality being brought in to replace or supplement aspects of the Pentecostal spirituality which have been found somewhat inadequate."<sup>44</sup>

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42. Ian Petit: Goodnews. No.9. April/May 1977.

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43. Interview. August 1980.

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44. Donal Dorr: Remove the Heart of Stone. Gill and MacMillan. 1978. p.67.

Submission to the Church and all that this entails has been a marked feature of the Catholic Renewal from the outset, and this has been fully affirmed by International Council members on behalf of the worldwide Renewal in audiences with Pope John Paul II. It is important to note that Charismatic Renewal has been understood as something which is integral to Catholicism and in no way alien when it is properly comprehended. It is essential to Catholics that Charismatic Renewal be seen to fit into the history of Catholic spirituality, and this more so because 'Pentecostalism' originated in the Protestant Churches. This is important both for those personally involved in the Renewal and for those observing it. The publication of the booklet Charismatic Renewal: Is It Really Catholic? highlights this concern, and in it Derek Lance asserts:

"Our claim is that the Charismatic Renewal is genuinely Catholic. It finds a home within Catholic theology, our understanding of Scripture and the centuries old traditions of Catholic Spirituality." <sup>45</sup>

Is the Renewal, then, a straight continuation of what went before? An NSC member sought to place this in perspective by saying that although God is doing a new thing in that there has never been such a worldwide phenomenon embracing both Catholicism and Protestantism, in another sense the Renewal is a continuation of the stream of the Spirit's movement in the past <sup>46</sup>. Edward O'Connor recognises that Charismatic Renewal is certainly new and strange in the sense that it breaks with some of the patterns of thought, attitude and behaviour that have become settled and customary in Catholicism. However, these patterns do not represent the authentic tradition of Christian spirituality, but an adjustment to mediocrity and a result of compromise between the gospel and the world. O'Connor believes that Pentecostal experience illustrates the classical Catholic doctrine in

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45. Derek Lance: Charismatic Renewal: Is It Really Catholic? Mayhew-McCrimmon. 1978. p.3.

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46. op.cit.43.

such a way as to confirm it and make it more concrete. Moreover, on many points Pentecostal experience comes as a jolting reminder of traditional doctrines that have become somewhat neglected. It therefore recalls some fine points and great insights which had been disregarded as a result of mediocrity or timidity:

"It will frequently be found, instead of Pentecostal experience being at odds with classical spiritual doctrine, the two confirm each other in opposition to a shallow recent humanism that is eager to create 'new theologies' because it has little idea of the deep workings of the Spirit of which classical theology was speaking."<sup>47</sup>

Cardinal Suenens of Belgium, who has embraced Charismatic Renewal, reinforces this:

"What strikes me most in the events that are taking place now is not their novelty but the resurgence of our original tradition and the rediscovery of our point of departure."<sup>48</sup>

All writers stress that there is no question of Catholic charismatics leaving the Catholic Church en masse. The Catholic Renewal must therefore of necessity remain distinct from Classical Pentecostalism and the Protestant Movement. O'Connor notes the dangers of self-imposed alienation from the church, stating that this development poses a grave problem and is one of the chief sources of resistance to the spread of the movement in the historic churches<sup>49</sup>. However, such disaffection has been minimal in

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47. Edward O'Connor: The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church. Ava Maria Press. 1971.

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48. Cardinal Suenens: A New Pentecost?. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1975. p.110.

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49. op.cit.47.

Catholicism. Whereas participants in the Charismatic Movement in Protestantism have often separated from parent churches and founded new ones, Catholic Charismatic Renewal has greatly deepened the attachment of its members to the Church. It is emphasized repeatedly that Catholic Charismatic Renewal cannot be defined as an incursion of Protestant influence into Catholicism, and Catholic participants are generally quite distinctive in their increased allegiance to doctrines and practices which are specifically Catholic.

The reactions of Catholics to the emergence of the Charismatic Renewal within their church have varied. Laurentin describes three different reactions of Catholics uninvolved in the Renewal. Traditionalists fear destructive innovation, the establishment of a charismatic hierarchy, new "ecumenical confusion", and the manipulation of these naive charismatic groups by political leftists. The progressives, on the contrary, fear that the mysticism of the charismatics may lead to a dispersal of forces, or enable conservative clerics to gain control again, or even become "the Trojan horse of traditionalism". Thirdly, integrists view the Renewal as the means of Anglo-Saxon Protestant infiltration, although some American Protestant circles have understood the Charismatic Movement rather as a marginal manifestation of the counterculture<sup>50</sup>.

Rene Laurentin's contribution to the consideration of theological questions raised by the Renewal is extremely valuable. His study is a critical, yet essentially positive evaluation, and he describes himself as a "participating observer", believing that participation is a prerequisite for understanding the Renewal, yet also claiming that he has maintained the distance necessary for objective investigation. Other writers who have produced important material are the British authors Derek Lance, Ian Petit, David Parry and Donal Dorr, the German professor, Heribert Muhlen, American Jesuit Francis Sullivan, and the Belgian Cardinal Suenens. Dorr and Sullivan stand out in particular for their penetrating insights and their determination to deal with central issues. The contributions of the British scholars Simon Tugwell, Peter Hocken, George Every, and John Orme

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50. op.cit.29. p.9.

Mills in their book New Heaven? New Earth?<sup>51</sup> are also noteworthy for the new ground that they cover. Of some importance too are the three "Malines Documents", which were composed by Cardinal Suenens and international teams of Renewal leaders and theologians and have been widely studied and read as containing thought which is acceptable to the Catholic authorities<sup>52</sup>. The press releases of the International Communications Office Serving the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, which is located in Brussels, often describe contacts with the Vatican, and the American based magazine New Covenant is widely circulated in Britain and is very influential, whilst Goodnews provides news, comment and teaching produced by the British Charismatic Movement. The early 'charismatic' books tended to bear the imprimatur and nihil obstat to indicate that they were in accordance with official Catholic doctrine, and this indicates a certain caution on the part of charismatics and Catholic officials alike. In recent years, however, the imprimatur and nihil obstat have not always appeared in new books. This may indicate that the Charismatic Renewal is achieving its objective of being largely accepted into Catholic orthodoxy.

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51. Simon Tugwell et al: New Heaven? New Earth?. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1976.

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52. Theological and Pastoral Orientations on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (Malines Document 1). Word of Life. 1974.

Ecumenism and Charismatic Renewal: Theological and Pastoral Orientations (Malines Document 2). Darton, Longman and Todd. 1978

Charismatic Renewal and Social Action: A Dialogue (Malines Document 3). Darton, Longman and Todd. 1980.

Chapter 2.THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT: PART 2A Comparison Between the Protestant Charismatic Movement and the Catholic Charismatic Movement.

Although fundamental differences between these will become apparent in the course of the thesis, some preliminary remarks must be made here in order to ensure clarity from the start. Firstly, whereas the Protestant Charismatic Movement has produced vast quantities of popular 'testimony' type literature, literature has been produced from within the Catholic Renewal which shows a depth of scholarship and study that goes far beyond this. Catholics show an eagerness to pursue detailed study of the Renewal, and the Protestant Movement by comparison is very deficient in this respect, Theological Renewal (to which several Catholics have contributed) providing the only consistent theological and scholarly study. One reason for this is that Catholicism's uniformity and its concern for its ongoing tradition make the study and integration of the Renewal far more of a priority than it is for Protestants.

The second difference between the Protestant and Catholic Renewals is that whereas the Protestants can claim the adherence of only a few recognised theologians worldwide, many leading Catholic theologians have become involved in the Renewal and have applied their skills to the study of it. This obviously has some bearing upon the previous point. Kilian McDonnell, himself a respected American theologian, remarks:

"The Catholic movement added a dimension which until recently was generally wanting in Protestant neo-Pentecostalism, that is, public identification with the renewal of trained theologians and scholars, some of international repute."

He then goes on to list in this respect the names of Donald Gelpi, Francis Sullivan, Stanislaus Lyonnet, Heribert Muhlen ( a recognised specialist in the field of pneumatology), Paul Lebeau, George T. Montague, Alday

Salvador Carrillo, Jan van der Vekan, and Peter Hocken, the latter of whom is British<sup>1</sup>. And Cardinal Suenens, another respected theologian and leader in the Catholic Church, writes:

"Thanks be to God there are theologians and exegetes in our universities who are reflecting on this experience, not as observers from without, but as interpreters from within."<sup>2</sup>

The fact that the occurrence of Catholic Charismatic Renewal was first noted in American universities and spread initially through others may well be significant here, for intellectuals and experienced academics were involved from the very start. The environments in which Catholic and Protestant neo-Pentecostalism first appeared were thus very different, and the Catholic environment may plausibly have set the tone for developments in academic study.

A third difference is between the very nature and composition of the Protestant and Catholic Charismatic Movements. The Protestant Renewal is diverse and complex, consisting of many denominational groups and communities; leaders and preachers involved in free-ranging, non-denominational ministry; groups which do not identify with any particular denomination or church; and an inestimable, but probably vast number of "hiddens", who have charismatic experience and orientation, but do not wish to declare this openly. All these different groupings are served by various organizations, magazines and newsletters, and some are surprisingly ignorant of what is going on beyond their particular group or circle. The uniformity and efficient communications of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal provide a marked contrast to this. Owing to the nature and government of the Catholic church, any particular aspect or emphasis tends to be similar wherever it appears in the world. Consequently, there

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1. Kilian McDonnell: Charismatic Renewal and the Churches. Seabury Press. 1976. p.15.

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2. Cardinal Suenens: A New Pentecost? Darton, Longman and Todd. 1975. p.79.



is little diversity in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. What is true in one country is generally true elsewhere too, and one finds the same basic pattern of organization worldwide. Methodology and resources have been mainly pioneered in America. America has also led the way in the establishment of Catholic Charismatic communities, such as the Word of God community in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and it may be expected that other countries will eventually follow suit, introducing specifically Catholic charismatic communities as distinct from those Protestant or ecumenical charismatic communities already in existence. It should also be noted that Charismatic Renewal has affected some clergy as well as laity in the Catholic Church, and indeed many convents and monasteries, particularly in America and Europe, have had experience of Charismatic Renewal. All this has resulted in marked uniformity in the Charismatic Renewal throughout the world, and because of this, the literature produced in one country has immediate application and circulation in others. New Covenant magazine, for example, is produced in America, but is considered a 'Catholic' rather than an American publication by its vast readership in the English-speaking world. Whereas in considering the Protestant Charismatic Movement, it has been sufficient to concentrate mainly on British literature because that produced elsewhere cannot be applied in the same way to Britain, this is not so with regard to the Catholic side. Certain American and European authors in particular are widely read in Britain, and material from their writings is therefore significant. Literature produced in countries other than Britain is thus considered in what follows in so far as it has been available to the Catholic community here.

Because of the uniformity of the Catholic Renewal, it is possible to speak of an actual 'charismatic theology'. However, in the Protestant Charismatic Movement there is no one 'charismatic theology'. There are several different theologies, and the different ways in which, for example, baptism in the Spirit, is understood illustrates the fact that the movement's diversity extends to its doctrine and self-understanding. Any attempt to define the theology of the Protestant Charismatic Movement must therefore involve a synthesis of these various ideas. Although one is able to speak of 'the Catholic view', one can rarely do this with regard to the Protestant Renewal.

The Protestant and Catholic Charismatic Movements have arisen in very different theological contexts. There are certain problems in evaluating Catholic Charismatic Renewal and its place within Catholicism. Firstly, as will be considered in more detail later, it is extremely difficult to determine the mood and content of contemporary Catholicism. Since the Second Vatican Council, the development of the opposing streams of the traditionalists and the progressives has meant that any attempt to maintain an appearance of unity in doctrine and belief has resulted very often in nebulous and ambiguous statements. The consequent need for clearer statements of Catholic doctrine is recognised by Catholics and Protestants alike. Gerard Noel, former editor of the Catholic Herald, comments as follows in the context of a consideration of post-Vatican II developments:

"Theoretically the Catholic Church never changes. That is, it never admits to having changed its stance on any basic issue. In practice it has found itself at the mercy of history. Changes of belief are recorded as 'developments' or 'clarifications' of positions previously held but no longer adequately expressed because of altered circumstances." <sup>3</sup>

And the Protestant David Wells writes concerning Vatican II:

"This change of mind in matters as important and fundamental as revelation, the relation of the natural and supernatural, salvation and the doctrines of the church and papal authority has rendered the vast majority of Protestant analyses of Catholic doctrine obsolete. It has also placed on Protestants an obligation to revise their thinking about Rome." <sup>4</sup>

Given this ambiguity in Catholic doctrine and belief, it is often difficult to relate Catholic Charismatic Renewal to its context in Catholicism,

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3. Gerard Noel: The Anatomy of the Catholic Church. Hodder and Stoughton. 1980. p.73.

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4. David Wells: Revolution in Rome. Tyndale Press. 1973. p.101.

simply because that context is not clear. Several of the topics listed above by Wells as having undergone change or caused serious differences of opinion in Vatican II are crucial to a consideration of Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and the present situation concerning them is not always clear. Defining the respective positions of the traditionalists and the progressives is also problematic. Broadly speaking, the traditionalists hold to the Church's pre-Vatican II teaching and seek to uphold the authority of the Church's traditions and of the Papal office. The progressives tend to question this and much more, and occupy much common ground with liberal Protestantism. The common assumption that the progressives are moving towards conservative Protestantism is totally unfounded. It is interesting with respect to this that Cardinal Suenens, who is in many ways the most influential spokesman for Charismatic Renewal and has been instrumental in bringing it to the attention of the Vatican, has been regarded by some as a leader of the progressives. Confusion and ambiguity are thus prevalent.

A further problem is encountered by the Protestant in the need to comprehend Catholic terminology and self-understanding. Exactly what do Catholic charismatics mean when they describe their experience and express themselves in the terminology and within the framework of Catholicism? To a Protestant, they sometimes seem incomprehensible or ambiguous, and greater care needs to be taken by Protestants in order to avoid misunderstanding and misrepresentation. As Protestant charismatics started off by employing the framework and terminology of Classical Pentecostalism, so Catholics have, more naturally, described their charismatic experience within the framework and concepts of their own tradition. Protestant charismatics have now reconsidered their borrowed theology and are attempting to reassess the Charismatic Movement in the light of Scripture. For the Catholic charismatics, the influences which would restrain them from reconsidering their existing theology are immense, and meanwhile their writings contain many ambiguities and outright contradictions on very important theological points. This does not seem to be apparent to the majority of Catholic charismatics. It may be a result of the fact that in Catholicism one's background of allegiance to traditional teaching and affirmation of it is extremely influential, and perhaps to some extent overwhelming. This is not true to anywhere near the same extent in

## Protestantism.

It is perhaps more generally accepted in Catholic Charismatic Renewal than in its Protestant counterpart that God treats different people in different ways, according to their individual personalities and needs, and that one should not always expect a stereotyped pattern of personal renewal. O'Connor remarked on this as he reflected upon the Notre Dame experience, emphasising that God treats each person individually in ways adapted to their circumstances, temperament and vocation, and does not use standard operating procedures. A member of the National Service Committee for England and Wales applied this same point to geographical situations, saying that although so many countries are witnessing the experience of coming into the release of the Spirit, it does not necessarily mean that God's plan will be the same for each country. The Protestant Charismatic Movement has been more prone to stereotyping experiences and has only recently modified this tendency.

A particular factor should be mentioned which is common to both the Protestant and the Catholic Renewals, and this is the impossibility of estimating the number of people involved. The Charismatic Movement has no membership as such, and the many different groupings and lack of any overall network mean that there is no reliable way of calculating its size. Furthermore, in addition to those who openly embrace the movement and are happy to be counted amongst its adherents, there are those with charismatic experience who do not wish to declare it openly and so are not identified with the movement: it seems that there are probably vast numbers of "hiddens" in all the main denominations. The mailing lists for newsletters and magazines certainly provide some indication of the extent of interest in the Charismatic Movement, but one person may be on several lists, whilst others may take the literature out of a detached interest. Estimates based on these lists could therefore be extremely misleading. Perhaps the size of the Catholic Renewal is easier to establish because most Catholic charismatics belong to a prayer group, and these are listed on a national basis. However, it may safely be said that many, many thousands of people in Britain have become personally involved in the Charismatic Movement and have had very considerable influence upon the Church of today.

B Why has the Charismatic Movement developed?

Those involved in the Charismatic Movement believe that it has developed because of the action and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and most of them look back to biblical times for the origins of the contemporary Charismatic Movement. Michael Harper refers to the charismatic leaders of the Old Testament, and goes on to say that in the New Testament period, the charismatic dimension moved into the very centre in the person of Jesus Christ. The words of Jesus in Jn.ch.14.v.12 - "He who believes in me will also do the works that I do" - are taken as an indication of Jesus's clear intention that the Church should continue to be charismatic in the same way that He had been. Harper concludes that:

"Certainly the early Church took him at his word, and the Church in its better moments has continued to do so ever since."

Modern charismatic experience, which is considered abnormal by many, was basic to the early Christians, and any abnormality lies in the fact that there are Christians today who are unaware that such experiences are possible, or even desirable<sup>5</sup>.

The modern Charismatic Movement is considered to be in a line of such movements which have appeared throughout church history, and which emphasize the original Pentecostal experience and its part in the experience of contemporary Christians. The first of these was Montanism<sup>6</sup> which arose in Phrygia in the latter half of the second century, and the over-zealousness of this movement is felt to have contributed to diminished

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5. Michael Harper: None Can Guess. Hodder and Stoughton. 1971. p.8.

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6. This movement was led by a man called Montanus and two prophetesses, who claimed the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It was characterised by eschatological concern and emphasis upon vivid spiritual experience, but was officially rejected by the Church. See further, Alan Richardson (ed.): A Dictionary of Christian Theology. SCM Press. 1979. p.223.

emphasis upon the charismatic gifts. References to the gifts of the Spirit decrease until the fourth century, from which time they disappear altogether from the records of church history. Harper describes the gift of speaking in tongues from the fourth century until the beginning of the twentieth as "a 'will o' the wisp', which reappears at odd times without achieving much prominence"<sup>7</sup>. The Chronological Guide which he includes amongst the introductory material to As At The Beginning can only leave a gap between the references found in the writings of Augustine of Hippo (354-430) and Francis Xavier (1506-1552). From this latter date onwards, Harper lists people and movements that had charismatic experiences or made some reference to the charismatic element, naming John Owen (1616-1683), Pacal (1623-1662), Jansenism (a seventeenth century movement), Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758, Charles Simeon (1759-1836), Cure d'Arms (1786-1859) and Edward Irving (1792-1834) as significant up to the start of the twentieth century. It is interesting that Harper does not mention John Wesley in this chronological guide, as others feel that he too is an important figure in the 'charismatic line'<sup>8</sup>. Classical Pentecostalism is considered an important forerunner of the contemporary Charismatic Movement, and the history of the former has been considered in detail by various writers<sup>9</sup>.

Catholic writers also trace a charismatic line back to the early church. Derek Lance states that the gifts could not have disappeared from the Church entirely during its history, claiming that there is ample evidence of prophecy, healings and deliverance in all ages, even though they tend to be found only in the recorded lives of the saints. He also

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7. Michael Harper: As At The Beginning. Hodder and Stoughton. 1965. p.19.

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8. See for example, A. Skevington Wood: "John Wesley, Theologian of the Spirit". Theological Renewal. No.6. June/July 1977. pp.26-33.

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9. See Walter J. Hollenweger: The Pentecostals. SCM Press. 1972; Nils Bloch-Hoell: The Pentecostal Movement. Allen and Unwin. 1964; Prudencio Damboriena: Tongues As Of Fire. Corpus Publications. 1969.

finds evidence for speaking in tongues in the case of the Desert Fathers, St. Dominic, the Cure d'Ars and "brother Masseo" in the Little Flowers of St. Francis<sup>10</sup>. Several writers note the importance of the monastic movements in preserving the stream of the Spirit throughout the ages. Laurentin apparently equates revivals, enthusiasm, and pneumatics (or charismatics), and would place Montanism, the religious orders, Joachim of Fiore, the movements of the Middle Ages, and the Alumbrados within this general grouping<sup>11</sup>. Dorothy Ranaghan lists as charismatic renewals the monastic movements in the third and fourth centuries, and the Franciscan and Dominican movements in the thirteenth century, then adds, somewhat surprisingly:

"At the heart of the Counter-Reformation was a charismatic renewal."<sup>12</sup>

Other links in the charismatic tradition are named by various writers as St. Ignatius of Loyola, John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, Francis of Assisi, Francis Xavier, Catherine of Siena, St. Vincent de Paul, St. John Regis and St. Peter Canisius. A Catholic Catechism brings the survey into the present century by stating:

"Surges of devotion to the Holy Spirit have marked many periods of Church history, as in the Middle Ages, in the seventeenth century, and in modern times. Papal encyclicals of the past century have done much to encourage this devotion."<sup>13</sup>

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10. Derek Lance: Charismatic Renewal: Is It Really Catholic? Mayhew-McCrimmon. 1978. pp.18-19.

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11. Rene Laurentin: Catholic Pentecostalism. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1977. p.143.

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12. Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan: As The Spirit Leads Us. Paulist Press. 1971. p.23.

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13. Donald Lawler et al: The Teaching of Christ: A Catholic Catechism for Adults. Our Sunday Visitor, Inc. 1976. p.166.

It must be noted that the validity of the links in such 'charismatic lines' does not go undisputed. Many of the statements which are used as evidence of the presence of charismatic phenomena are at best ambiguous and at worst tenuous. Evidence of charismatic activity is therefore not necessarily as weighty as some people claim.

Most Catholics believe that it is possible to trace the line of the Spirit's movement in Catholicism in this century in considerably more detail. The movement of the Focolarini, which began in Trent in northern Italy in 1943 and is a collective form of living the Gospel life, has had considerable impact by means of its spirituality. In addition to this, the Cursillo Movement, originating round about the nineteen-thirties in Spain, may be more closely linked with Charismatic Renewal than some realise. It consists of renewal retreats, and many feel that it has found its fulfillment in the Charismatic Renewal. Ian Murray speaks of his contact with the Cursillo Movement in Spain between 1963 and 1970, mentioning it because he has met a number of people involved in Charismatic Renewal who "came through the Cursillo"<sup>14</sup>. Ian Petit mentions an instance from the nineteenth century which does not appear to be widely known. He states that during that century the Spirit was manifesting Himself all over the world in different denominations, these manifestations bearing no relationship to each other. However, as a result of these, an Italian sister felt compelled to write to Pope Leo XIII to stress that the role of the Spirit was not being emphasized much in the Church. This resulted in Leo issuing two encyclicals on the Holy Spirit, which were given little attention. But it was also responsible for the Pope dedicating the world to the Holy Spirit in the privacy of his chapel at the start of the twentieth century. This coincided with the birth of Pentecostalism at Topeka, and rejection by the mainline churches brought about the beginning of Classical Pentecostalism. Ian Petit links together these apparently diverse occurrences in Protestantism, Catholicism, and what was to become Classical Pentecostalism as part of the gathering momentum of the movement of the Holy Spirit<sup>15</sup>.

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14. Ian Murray in: Anointed With The Spirit. Mayhew-McCrimmon. 1978. p.15.



One of the most significant events in Catholicism this century has of course been Vatican II, convened under Pope Paul. Edward O'Connor has made a study of this Pope's attitude to the Holy Spirit, and the following passage is of interest:

"... a profound and thoroughgoing renovation of the Church by a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit has been one of the chief goals of the pontificate of Paul VI. This spiritual renewal he conceives as involving a personal experience of the action of the Spirit manifested in joy, love, zeal and enthusiasm for the faith. From the very start of his pontificate, the Pope has called for such a renewal, prayed for it, and exhorted people to prepare for it by interior life. Finally, he confidently expected it to happen, and perceived signs that it was already beginning to take place." <sup>16</sup>

However, Gerard Noel does not see any clear link between Vatican II and the Charismatic Renewal:

"Few Catholics doubt the inspiration of the Spirit behind that gathering (Vatican II). Its principal effect, however, if not its primary concern, still fell within the realm of institutional and structural reform. Spiritual renovation was naturally implied in every document; but there was little, if any, visible foreshadowing of one particular phenomenon which had become, by the late sixties, one of the chief talking points in Catholic circles. It was only then that the expression 'charismatic renewal' was beginning to go the rounds." <sup>17</sup>

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15. Ian Petit: taped talk on Renewal In Perspective. Leaders' Conference. Hopwood Hall. 1980.

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16. Edward O'Connor: Pope Paul and the Spirit. Ava Maria Press. 1978. p.15.

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17. Gerard Noel: The Anatomy of the Catholic Church. Hodder and Stoughton. 1980.

Perhaps Cardinal Suenens provides the most accurate picture when he writes:

"Future historians will say that the Council opened a few windows in the upper room and let in the first breeze of springtime. But they will add, no doubt, that the 'mighty wind' of Pentecost had yet to fill 'the whole house' in which the disciples were sitting." <sup>18</sup>

The subject of charismatic gifts was reconsidered at Vatican II, and at the end of the Council the Pope asked Christians to pray for a new Pentecost that would renew both Church and world. It is widely believed by Catholic charismatics that the Charismatic Renewal is a direct answer to this prayer. The Liturgical Movement followed Vatican II, and the Holy Spirit received new emphasis through the accentuation of His role in eucharistic liturgies in particular. The Charismatic Renewal then succeeded the Liturgical Movement as the next factor in the centuries-old line of the Spirit's working.

Participants in the Charismatic Movement tend to have this overall view of history as an area in which there is virtually unbroken charismatic activity. However, whilst in no way necessarily invalidating this, there are other factors which must be considered with reference to the development of the contemporary Movement. Many people have commented that the Charismatic Movement is a reaction against the state of the Church, an attempt to redress the balance in favour of neglected emphases, and there is evidence that the house churches have arisen out of just such a reaction. Tangible experience of one's relationship with God, the exercise of the charismatic gifts, and new expression and freedom in worship are all points which received comparatively little attention prior to the Charismatic Movement and have been greatly stressed by it. The emphasis upon a living, experiential faith may also be seen as a reaction against the dry intellectualism and pessimism which has characterised theology since the second world war, and has often led people to question their faith. The certainty engendered by concrete, personal experience of God

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18. op.cit.2. p.p.x-xi.

effectively counterbalances the pressures imposed by this kind of theological climate. On the Catholic side, Charismatic Renewal seems to have answered the deep needs of many individuals by providing assurance of the reality of their faith in the face of the confusion and change that is prevalent in contemporary Catholicism. Ronda Chervin, an American Catholic charismatic, expresses this clearly:

"... some interpretations of Vatican II also caused much confusion. Amidst a swirl of visible change in the Church, the longings of the human heart for God, for certitude, for a firm hope in eternal life - these basic needs were submerged."

She goes on to explain:

"During the period immediately following Vatican II, increasing emphasis was placed on social concern ... There was a downgrading of Holy Scripture to the level of folk myths. Suspicion developed that belief in the unique truth of the Catholic Church was a form of intolerance, was unecumenical, was unchristian ... In this type of atmosphere, it is not difficult to see why many sophisticated Catholics decided to do their best to be good people and let the supernatural alone. Since God was viewed more and more as the 'ground of all being' and less and less as personal Saviour, many lay Catholics gave up going to daily Mass and began to push prayer into the background.

"In view of these factors I can see that there was a tremendous need for some new, unexpected sign of supernatural grace. The charismatic gifts, described in the New Testament, filled that need. They not only increased the faith of many in the presence of the Spirit today, but also counteracted the prevailing tendency to view Scripture as mainly symbolic and mythical. In these good effects, I see the first reason for the gift of tongues in our times. It is a light to those enveloped in the darkness of doubt." 19

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19. Ronda Chervin: Why I Am A Charismatic. A Catholic Explains. Liguori Publications. 1978. pp.11,65.

It is a common opinion that disillusionment with Vatican II and the dashing of the expectation it aroused prepared the way for Charismatic Renewal. Laurentin quotes Jean Seguy, who described Charismatic Renewal as:

" ... a compromise between charismatic innovation and traditionalism, resulting from the uncertainties engendered by Vatican II." <sup>20</sup>

Noting that Catholic Charismatic Renewal started in the universities, Seguy also regards it as a compromise in the struggle between the clergy and the Church clergy, since it is made up of self-regulating lay groups that are independent of the hierarchy. Whether these groups are in reality independent of the hierarchy as he claims, is in fact debatable. In addition to this, Seguy believes that the Renewal may be said to represent a compromise position in the struggles underlying ecumenism. In connection with this, we may note that Kilian McDonnell mentions Michael I. Harrison's study in America in 1969 which sees Catholic Charismatic Renewal as a reaction to strains felt within the church and on college campuses during the 1960s, namely a reassertion of the value of personal piety and loyalty to the Church <sup>21</sup>. Sociologist Bill McSweeney states that research on Charismatic Catholicism does indicate an antipathy towards Vatican II and the type of religion to which it gave rise in certain specific respects:

"The movement has attracted Catholics who share certain concerns and anxieties about the Church and the world: there is a general sense that society is in a state of crisis or moral decay; that the old certitudes have disappeared with the old stabilities and that spiritual rather than social reform is the proper solution. There is a feeling of ambiguity about personal salvation in the post-conciliar Church and concern about the loss of a sense of mystery and miracle. These are sought and reaffirmed in a new

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20. op.cit.11. p.11.

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21. op.cit.1. pp.37-38.

way in the Charismatic Movement; the element of the mysterious is emphasized in the practice of tongue-speaking and in the cultivation of illuminating experience, rather than rational argument, as the means of conversion; the practice of healing and the fostering of a lively faith in the power of intercessory prayer serve to reintroduce the miraculous into a religion which tends to de-emphasize magic and the intervention of the supernatural. Finally, Charismatic Renewal offers some compensation for the loss of a sense of the security of personal salvation - mediated through the sacramental system in the pre-conciliar Church - by restoring that certitude in the experience of being saved." <sup>22</sup>

Speaking of the Charismatic Movement as a whole, Laurentin presents it as an answer to the desires that the Jesus Movement awakened in American youth: it provides the healing of a diseased inter-subjectivity; simplicity; poverty; and a spirit of childhood, but without the reactions typical of the counter-culture and without any rejection of doctrinal or institutional foundations<sup>23</sup>. But he seeks to place the question of causality and origins within its proper perspective by saying that whilst one may recognise and acknowledge the natural resources on which the Charismatic Renewal draws, the Renewal must not be reduced to a simple product of such resources:

"A reduction of this kind would fail to take into account the central focus of the movement on the activity of the Holy Spirit ... Our own psychological powers and capacities are simply a means toward the encounter ... various instrumentalities come into play at the level of faith, which in itself is a personal, existential encounter." <sup>24</sup>

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22. Bill McSweeney: Roman Catholicism: The Search For Relevance. Blackwell. 1980. pp.217-218.

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23. op.cit.11. p.180.

The contemporary Charismatic Movement may also be placed within the context of church history, which records a repetitive cycle of enthusiastic movements. These arise as a result of institutionalism and, so the theory goes, eventually become institutionalized themselves, only to be followed by another enthusiastic movement in reaction against this. If the Charismatic Movement is viewed simply as another enthusiastic movement, then it may be merely a point in a repetitive cycle. A slight variation of this theory would describe the Charismatic Movement as the development of something that was already intrinsic, the inevitable outcome of what was present prior to it. This point is particularly emphasized by the Catholics, for whom continuity with tradition is of especial importance. Protestants tend to place little stress upon this, for although they usually insist upon a charismatic line stretching back to biblical times, they present each occurrence of the phenomenon as a dramatic in-breaking of the Holy Spirit rather than a point at which His activity is perhaps more visible than at others. Protestants often speak readily of the Spirit withdrawing from the Church, whereas Catholics find this notion inconceivable, and this accounts for the difference in attitude to this theory.

Other factors have undoubtedly played a part in the spread of the Charismatic Movement. The efficiency of communications has meant that information about the movement has spread rapidly and this has encouraged vast numbers of people to seek their own charismatic experience. The influence of American events and publications has already been commented upon, and the well-known adage that 'whatever starts in America ends up here' has been true for the Charismatic Movement. After the initial American influence at the start of the 1960s, the movement in Britain developed very much independently from that of America. However, whereas until the mid 1970s the emphasis remained upon baptism in the Spirit, gifts and miracles, between 1976 and 1977 this totally changed to one of Christians being brought together and working together. The American musicals Come Together and Bind Us Together were performed throughout Britain and were extremely influential in bringing this sphere of thought

to the fore. It thus seems that there occurred here a sudden massive influence from America comparable to that at the birth of the movement, and American influence has therefore played a significant role at the starting point and main turning points of the British Charismatic Movement.

Sociological and psychological reasoning has frequently been advanced to explain the occurrence, growth and popularity of the Charismatic Movement. In a world in which society is disintegrating, national economies are deteriorating alarmingly, and the nuclear threat presents the prospect of destruction in nightmare proportions, experiential encounter with God helps the individual to reach beyond the worsening situation of the physical world. The promised light at the end of the tunnel breaks into the here and now, and adds both a new dimension to reality and an assurance in the present of a relationship with the divine which will come to fruition in the future. This is mirrored by trends throughout the western world, where disillusionment with secular society and its materialistic emphases has resulted in new interest in the supernatural. The phenomenal growth of interest in the occult and in mysticism is evidence of this, as is the recourse to drugs for 'beyond the mind' experiences.

It is frequently noted that a large proportion of those involved in the Charismatic Movement are from the middle classes. This has led some to suggest that they have been drawn to such a movement because of the vacuum that is being left as their values and attitudes, so long dominant in Western society, are rejected, and their trust in themselves and their status is severely shaken. It is hard to prove or disprove such theories because of the complex relationships of the factors involved. But it is inaccurate to describe participants in the movement as escapists from the problems of society and the world. Very few do in fact retreat, and many find a new desire and vigour for involvement in the problems of society. A word of caution should also be added with respect to the common assumption that the process involved when a secularized person becomes religious, or increases in their religious commitment and experience, represents a conservative reaction against current trends. This is by no means necessarily the case, and such an assumption can be grossly misleading.

However, all the factors mentioned above contribute to the fact that the time is ripe for religious experience to come to the fore<sup>25</sup>. Experience of God is, after all, a valid component of Christianity, and one that has been maligned for different reasons by theologians of both liberal and conservative schools. The truth of Christianity may be accepted intellectually, but how does one know that it is true if it does not develop beyond the theoretical stage? The Charismatic Movement provides the answer by pointing to the availability of powerful, far-reaching experience of God for every believer, and by reaffirming that the biblical promise of the indwelling Holy Spirit is true for today. The authentic charismatic experience is utterly convincing, and plunges the Christian back into the world with the surety that God is alive and relevant, and that He is working in a world torn apart to bring His purposes to fulfillment. How, then, can the essence of Charismatic Renewal be adequately expressed? Whilst his dating may be disputed by some, Donal Dorr provides a statement which captures the eager excitement and expectation of the Charismatic Movement:

"The 1960s were the years of renewal in theology while the 1970s are years of renewal in religion. Of course this is an over-simplification. But I think it expresses a profound truth about the way the Spirit has been working in the Church."<sup>26</sup>

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25. For a fuller treatment of the relationship between the Charismatic Movement and the spirit of the age, see Stewart Grossman: Stewards of God's Grace. Paternoster Press. 1982. pp.59-69.

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26. Donal Dorr: Remove the Heart of Stone. Gill and MacMillan. 1978. p.9.



Chapter 3.ATTITUDE TO THEOLOGY

The Charismatic Movement has undergone a great deal of criticism on theological grounds and has received opposition from all shades of the theological spectrum. One of the movement's most distinct characteristics is in fact its theological diversity, for Protestants, Catholics, those of a liberal theological persuasion, and their conservative counterparts happily work and worship together as participants in charismatic renewal. They do not automatically discard their theological differences, but so dynamic is their charismatic experience that denominational and theological differences pale into insignificance as deterrents to Christian fellowship. The experience of unity in fellowship is regarded as self-validating, and theological issues may become very much secondary. Within the Charismatic Movement there is no general agreement over such central issues as the doctrine of baptism in the Spirit or the charismatic gifts, and indeed some views are diametrically opposed to each other. The charismatic experience, however, is all-encompassing and so vibrant is the experiential unity that these differences are tolerated, if not effectively ignored.

Although theologically diverse, the Charismatic Movement is generally orthodox, and the predominant influence within it appears to be a conservative one. This is a result of the fact that participants justify their experience by recourse to the events in the early Church as recorded in the Bible, and the reliability of the Bible thus becomes very important to people if it was not so before. This naturally produces a swing towards conservatism, and many participants describe themselves as evangelicals. GEAR, for example, as already noted, considers itself a pressure group for evangelical theology within its denomination. In reality, however, the Charismatic Movement tends to find itself in a no-man's-land, unacceptable to the liberal school because of a dominant biblicism, and arousing suspicion or even hostility from conservatives because of the centrality of experience in the formulation of theology. Rather than being prerequisite to a common experience, theological truth is presented as following on from an experience, governed by the Holy Spirit's leading of the individual.

Many critics feel that this leaves theology at the mercy of subjectivity, and that the objective truth and reliability of God's revelation is thereby seriously threatened. Furthermore, people tend to be attracted to the Charismatic Movement primarily by personal testimony and not by theology. This contrasts with the Reformed emphasis upon preaching as the vehicle for bringing a person to God. The acceptance of objective truth is given pre-eminence over subjective experience by this school of thought, and the Charismatic Movement arouses concern because it does not comply with this. Members of the Calvinistic school also find fault with the Charismatic Movement because of what they regard as Arminian tendencies. They claim that the movement is essentially Man-centred in that it emphasises Man's initiative in seeking the charismatic experience, rather than God's initiative in imparting the blessing. Because Man asks for it, God gives it: anyone who asks will receive and God's will is subjugated to Man's. The whole thrust of the Charismatic Movement is interpreted by these critics as essentially Man-centred, thus seriously compromising the biblical doctrine of the sovereignty of God.

Throughout the Charismatic Movement there has been an apparent neglect of theology. When experience is there for all to see, and participants are enjoying the benefits of the tangible presence of God, it is understandable that detailed explanations of what has happened seem somewhat superfluous and unnecessary. In the past decade, however, charismatics have taken requests for theological explanation more seriously and have given greater recognition to the importance of doctrine. There have been more positive attempts to grapple with theological questions, and the part played by the Catholic charismatics in this cannot be over-emphasised. But in spite of this, the theological discourses of charismatics often give the impression of being more theological than they really are. The use of Bible references in isolation gives the impression of depth and detail, but very often these are collections of scattered thoughts rather than an inter-locking theology. Moreover, some areas of the Charismatic Movement have a very negative attitude to theology, and this is often a reaction against the spiritual deadness and atheistic nature of much academic theology and the fact that for many Christians it has proved detrimental to their personal faith. On the other hand, however, it is for some people a reaction against a conservatism that has seemed to them to be so

doctrinaire and legalistic that the vitality has been sapped from their faith. Such a theology very often had no place for their charismatic experience and even opposed and condemned it. Richard Quebedeaux states:

"Howard Ervin, as a chief (American) theological spokesman for Neo-Pentecostalism, sees Charismatic Renewal as the alternative to both anti-supernaturalist ('liberal') theology on the one hand, and to doctrinaire orthodoxy on the other. <sup>1</sup>

This is an accurate portrayal, for the charismatic experience provides an attractive alternative for people who feel stifled by either of these environments.

Differences of theological opinion abound in the Charismatic Movement and there has been little attempt to formulate a specific 'charismatic theology'. Walter Hollenweger, who has specialised in research into Classical Pentecostalism, expresses regret at this and writes of the charismatics:

"By and large - with some notable exceptions - they took up one of two positions. Either they did exactly what I hoped would not happen: namely, they imitated the Pentecostal movement in spite of the recommendation by Donald Gee, a notable teacher of the classical British Pentecostals, not simply to imitate classical Pentecostalism on a higher social level. Or else they said: Pentecostalism has made us better Anglicans. We believe and teach and celebrate everything traditional Anglicanism stands for. There is no need for a critical review of our theological position. Neo-Pentecostalism does not change any of our melodies, but it changes the rhythm and sometimes the key. Neo-Pentecostalism does not change our churches, but it lights them up. It does not change our ministry, but it makes it more credible. It does not change our ecumenical commitment, but it makes it more alive." <sup>2</sup> (his italics)

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1. R. Quebedeaux: . The New Charismatics. Doubleday & Co. N.Y. 1976.

Although it is inaccurate to say that the Charismatic Movement does not result in significant changes in churches and ministries, Hollenweger is entirely correct in noting the failure to recognise the need for theological review. Certainly at the beginning of the movement, testimonies predominated at the expense of theological explanation and exposition, and this tendency was perpetuated by the development of a distinctive popular charismatic literature, which concentrated upon recounting vivid spiritual experience and was highly saleable on account of its somewhat sensational content. Testimonies were extremely influential in attracting people to the movement and were therefore regarded favourably. The very first issue of Renewal in January 1966 carried a report of the first London convention of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International (FGBMFI)<sup>3</sup> under the title "A new breath of life", and commented:

"Some would complain of the absence of biblical exposition. Even the main speakers gave their testimonies, and we had to wait for Oral Roberts and the Royal Albert Hall rally before we heard a scriptural message. Yet the testimonies were biblically based. Their experiences were illustrations of the truth. They demonstrated the truth of the Bible and the reality of God in the twentieth century. In some ways they were a better answer to 'Honest To God' than many a theological dissertation. 'A man with an experience,' it has been said, 'is never at the mercy of a man with an argument.' But there is a serious danger of a wrong balance here. Christians cannot thrive for long on a diet of testimonies. They need strong meat. This should be recognised."

<sup>4</sup> (my italics)

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2. Walter Hollenweger in Peter Hocken et al: New Heaven? New Earth? Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976.

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3. This Classical Pentecostal organization was founded in America by Demos Shakarian in 1953.

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4. Report "A new breath of life". Renewal No.1. Jan 1966. pp.7-8.

The claim that experience legitimates truth in a way that theoretical theology cannot do recurs again and again in the history of the Charismatic Movement. Yet the need for theology was recognised at this stage and the danger of imbalance was noted. Why, then, has correction of the imbalance only recently begun? A strong impetus in this direction has undoubtedly come from the Catholics with their emphasis upon theological study. The obtrusive anti-theological stance of certain house church circles has also played its part, by alarming some denominational charismatics at its extremism and stimulating them to theological study in an effort to redress the balance.

Whilst early issues of Renewal were concerned mainly with news items and testimonies of experience of charismatic renewal, there has been a growing interest in theology. In his report of the Fountain Trust International Conference at Guildford held in July 1971, J. Rodman Williams, a participant in the American Charismatic Movement, noted the widespread theological interest of those present. He found this in evidence in class sessions, in the theological workshop which met for three days, and in general conversations. He stated that many were deeply aware of the need for "the most serious possible theological reflection upon the Pentecostal reality and experience" and of how essential it was to relate this movement of the Holy Spirit to the whole of Christian truth. A number of questions such as the relationship of baptism in the Spirit to baptism in water, the connection between theology and experience, and the relationship between the Charismatic Renewal and church structures were raised and discussed. Rodman Williams felt that this theological interest underscored the vast importance of continuing study and reflection in the future.<sup>5</sup> About ten months later Renewal published an article by John Poulton in which he discussed the systematizing of charismatic experience. He described the growth points in contemporary evangelism as "the fringe development of witnessing groups, and the new life inside the churches where the Spirit is evident". This presented a challenge to much of the traditional theological and ecclesiastical thinking, and it was

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5. J. Rodman Williams: "Genuine Concern for Pentecostal Theology". Renewal No.34. Sept. 1971. p.9.

consequently theologically tempting to write into existing spheres a place for all that was going on and thereby seek to contain it. Pentecostal theology, however, is untidy when considered in the light of a desire to have all experience and thought carefully systematized, and Poulton stated that the Charismatic Renewal challenged the desire to have things controlled and predictable. He alleged that an attempt to get all new experience tied up immediately in relation to what was known from the past did in fact constitute a refusal to be open to God today, and suggested that the desire to describe things in theological terms may simply be motivated by a wish to be better understood and accepted by others. A genuine openness to God must consist of three elements, the first of which is a willingness to be filled with all that God wills and therefore to risk the inadequacy of past stereotypes of religious experience. Then secondly, it is essential to communicate what is going on, and here he quotes Arthur Wallis, who wrote that "the experience is not nearly so difficult as the explanation!". There must be a wariness of attempting to impose a single order where a single order is not only impossible, but was never intended by God in the first place, and new patterns should be allowed to develop through the "kaleidoscopic evidences of God's activity". Finally, Poulton recognised that there must be serious study by theologians, but he emphasized that this should consist of an openness and exploration rather than an endeavour to narrow down and pinpoint God and His activity. He foresaw a danger of running for shelter too soon behind "the pat answers, the Scriptures used as cliches and the proofs of the past", and pointed out that God may be giving "new tools for His new age" for the communicating of experience<sup>6</sup>.

It is a frequently expressed opinion that if the Charismatic Movement is to be taken seriously, it needs a much more persuasive theological base, and Tom Smail's Reflected Glory<sup>7</sup> was warmly received on this score as a

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6. John Poulton: "The Point of Present Untidiness." Renewal No.39. June/July 1972. pp.2-4.

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7. Tom Smail: Reflected Glory. Hodder and Stoughton. 1975.

competent theological book produced from within the Charismatic Movement<sup>8</sup>. One finds in the pages of Renewal two somewhat incompatible desires as regards theology. The first, typified by Poulton, is to avoid forcing God's activity into too rigid a theology, and the second, expressed by the reviewer of Smail's book, is to see the Charismatic Movement producing a scholarly theology which will hold its own in scholarly circles. It is difficult to hold these two in balance. Yet in Renewal there is an alertness to the dangers of an absence of theological awareness and questioning, and a readiness to probe the theology and implications of various issues, as in the case of the theological basis of the musical If My People, which called for national repentance on the basis of 2 Chron.ch.7.v.14<sup>9</sup>. The Renewal Study Sections, which began in Renewal No.55 (and were concluded in the last issue of 1980), have been an important feature of the magazine, providing theological, Bible-based studies of various themes designed to be removed and filed by the reader into a work of reference. The various series dealt with aspects of renewal in the Holy Spirit, surveyed books of the Bible to see what they had to say about the Holy Spirit, and considered various renewal themes in the life and mission of the Church. The problem remains, however, of balancing emphasis upon theology with emphasis upon experience. A contributor to Theological Renewal wrote:

"You can end up with a theology which is unrelated to our Christian experience and our Christian life; and our theology ought always to be growing out of life in Christ, our life in the Spirit; we must always come back to experience."<sup>10</sup>

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8. Michael Green: review. Renewal No.61. Feb/March 1976. pp.11-12.

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9. Editorial ("National Repentance"). Renewal No.57. June/July 1975. p.3.

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10. D.W. Allen: "The Theology of the Spirit and Charismatic Renewal". Theological Renewal No.2. Feb/March 1976. p.21.

He is not alone in coming down firmly on the side of the primacy of experience. Many attempts to hold the two together tend to sound impressive but are really either nebulous or ambiguous:

"The charismatic renewal does not represent a threatening new theological system at variance with the inherited Christian traditions. It is in essence a spirituality which can be made to fit quite readily into Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed, pietist, or Catholic frames of thought. Rather than fighting the renewal theologically, our task is to elaborate this spirituality in categories that are biblical and evangelical. What the charismatic renewal contributes to traditional theology is not a set of novel theories, but a fresh awareness of the role of the Spirit in the Christian life, marked by the reappearance of charismatic activity like that of the primitive church. The movement is not characterised by a new doctrine of the Spirit, but by the fact that all of the older doctrines come to new life through a renewal of faith." <sup>11</sup>

This writer's emphasis falls into one of the positions over which Hollenweger expressed regret. The Charismatic Renewal can indeed be fitted into different traditions and theologies, but this inevitably involves a glossing over of elements which cause problems, and it is consequently a rather negative way of dealing with it. The Catholics in particular have dealt with the theology of the movement in this way, and have produced some contradictory and confusing statements. One of the particular defects of theological expression in the Charismatic Movement is its lack of precision and clarity, and attempts to fit into all traditions can only exacerbate this.

The influence of Michael Harper has already been noted, and his comments concerning theology may reasonably be expected to have directed the attitudes of many in the Charismatic Movement. Particularly in his

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11. Clark H. Pinnock: "An Evangelical Theology of the Charismatic Renewal". Theological Renewal No.7. Oct/Nov.1977. p.33.



recent publications, Harper has recognised the importance of competent theology to the movement. His own contributions in this field have been among the more lucid, and he has made many perceptive comments, even if some of the overall conclusions which he draws are more open to question. In 1965, he questioned whether a critic of the movement who described the most serious weakness and defect of the Charismatic Movement as the "total lack of theology" was justified in doing so. Although acknowledging that the movement developed on a very simple theological basis and only gradually began to stress the need for theological training, Harper points out that theology itself does not automatically provide strength. There is both good and bad theology, and:

"Bad theology can be more harmful than no theology at all."<sup>12</sup>

However, by 1979 he acknowledges more clearly the importance of a correct and carefully considered theology. With reference to the exaggerated demonology which has often been a feature of the Charismatic Movement, he pinpoints faulty theology as the main reason behind this<sup>13</sup>, and commenting about the problems of terminology associated with the phrase 'baptism in the Spirit', he emphasises the necessity of facing up to the theological difficulties rather than shirking them<sup>14</sup>.

When one considers the vehemence with which the Charismatic Movement has been attacked from some quarters on theological grounds, defensiveness on the part of participants is more understandable. Harper is certainly eager to show that experience is important, and it is not his primary intention to denigrate theology as some have assumed. The following passage makes his position more clear:

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12. Michael Harper: As At The Beginning. Hodder and Stoughton. 1965. p.94.

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13. Michael Harper: This Is The Day. Hodder and Stoughton. 1979. p.90.

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14. op.cit.13. p.61.

"But we are not going to be theological. Little attempt here is made to evaluate what is happening in terms of Christian doctrine. This is not to say that theology does not matter. It obviously does. However, this book is concerned with what happens, rather than why it happens. The stress on experience will not please some. It may be thought too subjective. But is not the Church today largely starved of experience of God for all its able theologians and teachers?" <sup>15</sup> (his italics)

Harper clearly differs from many Christians today who hold to the position that a faulty theology negates the validity of any connected experience, and that something theologically correct must be correct in all other ways, even if this does not appear to be borne out in practice. With regard to the practice of baptizing people outside the context of the local church, he states:

"It may have made theological sense, but it certainly didn't make pastoral sense." <sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, although he says of the late Kathryn Kuhlman:

"Her gospel was theologically limited. Her teaching abysmally inadequate."

he writes that God used her in strange and decisive ways<sup>17</sup>. Many Christians would say that this is a contradiction and that because of Kuhlman's inadequate theology, her healing ministry cannot have been of God. But not so Harper. Nor is he saying that experience without theology

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15. Michael Harper: None Can Guess. Hodder and Stoughton. 1971. p.8.

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16. op.cit. 13. p.93.

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17. op.cit.13. p.83.

can be self-validating. He may rather have brought out an important point, namely that God does not necessarily wait until somebody's theology and understanding is flawless before He deals with and uses that person. The acquisition of theological knowledge and understanding may be a gradual process and one which is not automatically free from errors. The point at which God draws the line may not always be the same as that designated by staunch conservatives.

Classical Pentecostalism has always received considerable criticism because of its theology, and Harper defends it on the grounds that it is unfair to castigate Pentecostals for their lack of theology when one's own has often been damaging to faith and experience. He cites the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the advent of modernism as two areas in which the Church, with the exception of the Pentecostals, has failed. Furthermore, he claims, the theology of the classical Pentecostals may well be nearer to the truth than that of the rest has been<sup>18</sup>. With regard to the theology of the Charismatic Movement itself, Harper points to criticism of this as one major line of attack against the movement:

"I would be the first to agree with the critics that charismatics are not at their best in theological argument, and their dialectic is distinctly hairy at times. There are some weird and wonderful theological explanations which charismatics have advanced to justify themselves."

However, he neatly reverses the popularly accepted diagnosis, stating instead that:

"The Charismatic Renewal has got its theology about right. But it is its performance which needs most correction." (his italics)

He feels that whatever may be said about the inadequacy of its theological presentation, its basic theological position is sound. The argument put forward to support this is characteristic of participants in the

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18. op.cit.12. pp.94-95.

Charismatic Movement, namely that if the experience is good and helpful, then the theology cannot be in error. Harper explains this as follows:

"I find it very hard to accept that it is ever possible in any basic sense to produce a magnificent performance which is based on theological error. Conversely, it is possible to have sound theology without the complimentary performance. But how can one have unsound theology and yet see glorious effects in the lives of people? Of course, it depends a lot on what you mean by theology. But if theology has to do with truth and ultimate reality, that truth is intended to be incarnated in human life and seen in action. If there are no signs or effects in the lives of those who hold to it, one may reasonably doubt the reality of what is being professed but not to reject it out of hand. But if the signs are given and the effects are seen, how can one say 'it's not true'?"

He believes it could be shown without too much difficulty that the actions of charismatics, and accompanying signs, are the direct results of the theology that they believe. Consequently, it is both unscientific and unfair to applaud charismatic action yet also disapprove of their theology:

"At first glimpse charismatic teaching ... makes nonsense. But on closer examination, I believe it makes really good sense. Or to put it succinctly; 'it works'." <sup>19</sup>

This argument is logical but simplistic, and fails to take into account the complexities involved where human and spiritual factors are operative. Furthermore, it is surprising that in a movement which has placed much stress upon human and satanic counterfeits, the latter are not mentioned in this context.

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19. op.cit. 13. pp.55-56.

Allowing for some variations, Harper describes the basic theological position of the Charismatic Movement as one which teaches that the effects of God's real presence and active intervention in the world are to be expected and experienced in the lives of Christians. Because the movement articulates a theology which is commonplace, in some ways it possesses no great incentive to provide theological justification for its position. It is the vital twists, however, that make the difference:

"Charismatic doctrine is 'on fire'. It takes what others have made dull and tedious and makes it exciting and personal. This goes some way towards explaining its popularity with the masses. Just as ordinary people flocked to hear Jesus and could listen to him all day and avoided their own 'theologians', whom they found out of touch with human heart-strings, so charismatic teachers draw together those who are disenchanted with the teachers of our day." <sup>20</sup>

The picture he paints of theologians is a black one indeed. Later in the same book, Harper states that there is little need to adjust the movement's theology. However, he makes two telling statements. Firstly, although he asserts that the theology is "about correct", he allows that it may be inadequately formulated. And secondly, he admits to there being a weakness in what it sometimes builds on this theology<sup>21</sup>. It is questionable whether these two points can be allowed without casting doubt on the strength and clarity of the underlying theology itself. Harper suggests, in the context of ecumenism, that some of the theological knots in need of untying are really the result of personal difficulties and should therefore be dealt with at the personal level. Also, theological positions are sometimes formed not only through the influence of the mind, but through feelings and personal relationships too, so forgiveness and reconciliation may produce the answer in such cases<sup>22</sup>. But one cannot help but feel that this is

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20. op.cit. 13. p.57.

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21. op.cit.13. p.81.

avoiding the crux of the matter when one is considering the issue of theology.

A new emphasis upon the importance of theology within the Charismatic Movement was marked in October 1975 by the appearance of Theological Renewal. This was to be issued three times a year as a supplement to Renewal, which may be interpreted as reflecting the Fountain Trust's concern to integrate for its readership the news and general teaching material of Renewal with the more weighty theological content of Theological Renewal. The editorial introduction to the 'new magazine'<sup>23</sup> reflects the personal concern of Tom Smail, then Director of the Fountain Trust, to bring together experience and theology. This concern doubtlessly influenced the Trust and led it to consider more seriously the need of the Charismatic Movement for a clearly thought-out theology. The title of the magazine is ambiguous and can be understood as implying either that charismatic renewal needs to be theological, or that theology needs to be renewed. Tom Smail is in fact one of the few academically trained theologians involved in the Protestant Charismatic Movement, and whilst stating that the first meaning was the intentional one, he feels, as a theologian of considerable training, that the second is also important. He suggests that a more theological understanding of charismatic renewal may well result in a renewal of theology itself, in that the dichotomy between charismatics and academics would be dissolved if the latter were to see the development of a viable charismatic theology. He agrees entirely with J. Packer's oft-quoted comment that the Charismatic Movement is "evidently a movement still seeking a theology, and vulnerable until it finds one", and recognises the necessity of charismatics participating in theological formulation and bringing theological life into theology. He hopes that Theological Renewal may encourage charismatics in this direction.

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22. op.cit.13. p.111.

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23. T.A. Smail: Editorial. Theological Renewal. No.1. Oct. 1975.

Commenting upon his personal experience, Smail points out that the Church has offered people unsatisfactory theology in that it has failed to take into account the validity and necessity of individual experience. Some people find that their theological training brings doubt rather than assurance and consequently react against theology altogether. Other people respond not by reacting against theology but by over-embracing it, and this leads to an intellectual legalism in which correct doctrine and orthodoxy are paramount. For both groups the result is the same and there is no experientially real and living relationship with Christ. Charismatic Renewal affects the first group by bringing recovery of assurance and faith, and the second by pulling the emphasis back to the relationship with Christ. Smail says that he himself was a member of the second group and describes his reaction upon hearing Dennis Bennett's testimony to personal charismatic experience. The doctrinal inadequacies of this testimony struck him immediately, but so too did what Smail describes as the "joy, peace, freedom and power which came right from the heart of the New Testament". His personal turning away from theological legalism was "an essential step in the rediscovery of God's first-hand grace", and to many people this may be disturbing in its implication that theology and experience are in opposition to each other. Smail, however, is aware of this danger and is concerned about such a divide between the two, stating that this must never be allowed to become absolute. Any gulf between academic theology and living faith is detrimental to both and he tries to draw the two together by stating that in the Church people are theologians not primarily because of intellectual and academic ability, but because they have been touched, renewed and commissioned by God's Spirit. The theological world tends to regard itself as academically superior, and thus generally superior, to charismatics, but Smail responds by saying that to be worthy of a hearing by charismatics it must speak in committed faith from the midst of the community of faith:

"If that does not happen it will simply be confirmed again that God has hidden from the theologically wise and prudent what he has revealed to babes."

Does he mean by this that academic theology is of little worth in its own right? He states that theologians have any importance only as members of

the body of Christ and that if they are to function productively they are as much in need of renewal by the Spirit of Christ as are all other members. Michael Harper makes the same point when he says that theologians should be committed members of the Christian community:

"Without such a commitment the spiritual life of a theologian will deteriorate rapidly, and so will his theological contribution, however erudite it may still appear."<sup>24</sup> (his italics)

One can sympathise with the desire to see all those engaged in theological study and outworking experiencing a deep spiritual relationship with Christ. But if they do not have this dimension, is the product of their theological reflection automatically valueless? Smail and Harper seem to be saying that this is so, and here they may be edging towards implying a division into first-class and second-class Christianity. Apart from the theological problems which this creates, the inevitable implication is that only charismatics have anything worthwhile to contribute. This is unacceptable.

Smail believes that one will always find a theologian present where there is healthy charismatic renewal. He is referring not to the professional academic, nor necessarily to an intellectual, but to a person used by God to bring the Scriptures to bear upon present experience, providing correction and a placing of what is happening within the spectrum of the whole truth of Christ. Whilst this is a valid emphasis, it would be unfortunate if it was denied that purely academic theology has any part to play at all.

Acknowledging that Classical Pentecostal second-blessing theology is inadequate, Smail says that an alternative is needed which will be both scriptural and whole. This in fact is a crucial point, for the problem with the Charismatic Movement is one of relating charismatic experience to

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24. Michael Harper: Let My People Grow. Hodder and Stoughton. 1977. pp.207-208.



the whole experience of the Christian and of formulating a theology which will do this.

Seventeen issues later, Theological Renewal left the auspices of the Fountain Trust when the latter was closed and came under the wing of Grove Books. How did Tom Smail review the situation in 1981 as compared with that of 1975?

"In our first issue we defined our concern as being with the theology of renewal and the renewal of theology. Nobody can say that we lacked ambition! We have in fact concentrated on the former rather than the latter. If, however, there is any truth in what we have been saying, the two are interconnected. There will be a renewal of theology only as the Church lives in the Spirit and retrieves the basic insights of the biblical gospel. Equally any theology of renewal worthy of the name has to be a corollary to a doctrine of Christ and a preliminary to a doctrine of the kingdom ...

"We are interested ... in a theology which will face academic challenges, but which will also be in contact with practical concerns and will be the basis of kerygmatic proclamation, that will arise out of worship and will feed itself worship, that is spiritual because it is responsive to the heart of the gospel, but that is down to earth because it is near the grassroots of the Church." <sup>25</sup>

This reflects a more integrated presentation in which it is difficult to separate the different factors. It thus implies a more mature and balanced approach.

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25. T.A. Smail: editorial ("Fountain Trust: A Theological Farewell"). Theological Renewal No.17. Feb.1981. pp.4-5.

Tom Smail has written two books, Reflected Glory<sup>26</sup> and The Forgotten Father<sup>27</sup>. The first is concerned with the ministry of the Holy Spirit and seeks to place this in its correct context as a reflection of the glory of Christ. It was widely heralded as the first truly theological work to be produced from within the Protestant Charismatic Movement and as an illustration of the fact that participants were prepared to grapple with theological issues. The book has not escaped criticism from some quarters on the grounds that it is unbalanced and lacks clarity concerning the nature of Christ. However, it has been enthusiastically received by many people both within and outside the ranks of the movement. The GEAR broadsheet was very positive in its comments:

"For thinking people both within and without charismatic renewal this will prove a most useful book. To some involved it will be a useful stabilizer in a world where subjectivism can so easily rule the roost. To others not involved it will provide a useful pointer to what are the central issues in renewal and perhaps a counter to some who have alleged that charismatic experience must necessarily sound the death knell to all decent theology. If theology is to be characterised as 'faith thinking about itself' then here is an example of theology that is alive ...

"This is a book that will offer reassurance to many people, to those who fear that in charismatic renewal the fundamental issues of the gospel are at risk; to those who fear that a proper doctrine of the church is in danger of being submerged. It will provide a timely and needed biblical and theological grounding for what many people have come to know in the area of their own experience, and it will act as a corrective in places where that experience has been allowed to become the absolute governing principle."<sup>28</sup>

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26. op.cit.7.

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27. Tom Smail: The Forgotten Father. Hodder and Stoughton. 1980.

This review has pinpointed the main issues involved in theological concern about the Charismatic Movement - experiential and subjective imbalance, theological inadequacy, basic doctrinal failings - and shown that there is an awareness within the movement of these dangers.

It has already been stated, however, that generally speaking the most competent and thorough theology produced by the Charismatic Movement has come from the Catholic renewal rather than the Protestant. The important role of theology was quickly recognised here, and there is little evidence of any jettisoning of theology in favour of experience and practice alone, such as has happened in some areas of the Protestant Charismatic Movement. On the contrary, there has been an eagerness to study, think through, and grapple with theological issues. John Orme Mills provides a succinct summary of the inadequacy of modern approaches to theology:

"Theology, which claims to address man concerning the things that move him most deeply has dwindled into a game clever clergymen play with each other, complete with a set of rules and terminology only meaningful to the players. At least, that is how virtually all non-theologians see it. It tries to trap and freeze the ineffable within neatly rounded-off propositions written for cool reading: that at any rate is what non-theologians think theologians are trying to do, and by and large the non-theologians are right. Is it surprising, then, that so few of them want to join the clever clergymen's game? ...

"Discovering that modern academic theology has short-comings - that should not disconcert us excessively. What should disconcert us is that this theology can be seen as a positive threat." 29

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28. GEAR broadsheet. Issue no.6. Christmas 1975. pp.8,11.

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29. John Orme Mills: op. cit. 2. p.99.

New Heaven? New Earth?, the book in which Mills is writing, is an impressive volume which is basically concerned with theology. It aims to show:

"...how the encounter with Pentecostalism by Christians in the historic churches (in his case the Roman Catholic Church) can and should stimulate new theological reflection and even a new way of doing theology." <sup>30</sup>

In drawing attention to the affinities between Pentecostalism and Evangelical Protestantism in the same book, Peter Hocken warns that the more Pentecostalism is described and defined in doctrinal and theological terms, the more difficulties it will raise for those in traditions other than these two. So how do Catholics cope with such difficulties? John Orme Mills provides an example:

"I believe one reason why I am a Roman Catholic, not a member of a Pentecostal church, is that Catholicism has a developed ecclesiology and classical Pentecostalism does not. But where does that take us? Anywhere?"

"There is in fact nothing in those positive aspects of Pentecostalism I have concentrated on here that does not recall some aspect of the authentic tradition of the 'Great Church', even if tradition often hidden today or undeveloped." <sup>31</sup> (his italics)

This comment is in fact rather subtle and is typical of a Catholic author. He wishes to stress firstly that Pentecostalism as such is integral to Catholicism, and secondly that there is much common ground between the two. This is accomplished by the inclusion of the adjective 'positive', the

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30. op.cit.2. (back-cover)

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31. John Orme Mills: op.cit.2. p.99.

ignoring of other aspects which are undesirable or irreconcilable with Catholicism, and the statement that these positive aspects are part of authentic Catholic tradition. This ensures the Catholic stamp of approval, and the reference to hidden or under-developed traditions is the 'let-out-clause', providing justification for the appearance of anything previously unmentioned or unemphasized in Catholicism. This position is a common one. For example, a Catholic nun was able to relate the Charismatic Renewal to Catholic theology with no problems whatsoever. She stated that charismatic renewal does not change one's theology at all, but makes it more personal and deepens one's relationship with God because one experiences the meaning of the theology that one has learned<sup>32</sup>. Although the Catholic charismatics have been careful not to assimilate classical Pentecostal theology, they have absorbed their experience into Catholic theology and eased it into the existing mould, when a little more thought would have made it clear that some aspects do not fit. Certain aspects of charismatic doctrine are irreconcilable with Catholic doctrine, and this is particularly so with regard to the doctrines of conversion and baptism, and Catholic experience of baptism in the Spirit. There is an underlying tension here which must either be ignored or honestly faced. The difficulty lies in the fact that Catholics usually feel duty-bound to accept Catholic doctrine and simply do not expect ever to question it. However, it is in relation to the essence and nature of baptism in the Spirit that the issue seems likely to come to a head. Theologians such as Rene Laurentin, Francis Sullivan and Donal Dorr have recognised that the reality of what is happening in baptism in the Spirit is difficult to reconcile with official Catholic doctrine and their writings suggest a quandary concerning what to do. It is essential that they do not call a halt at this point, but go on to tackle the issues. Theological questions have not always been faced honestly by both Catholic and Protestant charismatics, and it has too often been assumed that the Charismatic Movement will help to maintain the theological status quo and in so doing will prove its own legitimacy. In the Catholic Church in particular this will only happen if it ignores the necessity of a theological approach unfettered by presuppositions, and it is therefore to some extent trapped

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32. Interview with a Catholic nun. Wrexham. December 1980.

by the system which contains it.

Cardinal Suenens could perhaps be looked to as a leader and theologian within the church who could provide a lead in the re-evaluation of theology in the light of the Charismatic Renewal. But it seems that he is unlikely to do this. His own position as regards the traditionalist and progressive schools in Catholicism is unclear. Once regarded as a prominent figure amongst the progressives "until he fell into the arms of the charismatic movement"<sup>33</sup>, he seems to have swung back towards traditionalism, and his present position is in need of clarification. He shows a keen loyalty to Catholic theology and tends to produce some statements which are typically ambiguous of a church which is desperately seeking to give an impression of unity and to accommodate increasingly divergent views:

"The unity of the Church ... is compatible with a pluralism on the liturgical, canonical and spiritual planes. But it uncompromisingly requires a fundamental unity in faith. I do not say in theology for provided that the faith is safe and intact, the Church welcomes a plurality of theologies." <sup>34</sup>

The current approach within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal to the place of theology is a positive one. Most people readily accept that the early writings of the Charismatic Movement were excessively simplistic, with little attempt at theological reflection, and the tendency to project a single person's experience supplemented only slightly by the experience of a few close contacts. Edward O'Connor noted in 1971 that such writings usually lacked "the broad vision and balanced considerations characteristic of classical (Catholic) theology"<sup>35</sup>. The nineteen-seventies saw the

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33. Peter Hebblethwaite: The Runaway Church. Collins. 1978. p.12.

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34. Cardinal Suenens: Ecumenism and Charismatic Renewal: Theological and Pastoral Orientations. (Malines Document 2). Darton, Longman and Todd. 1978. p.11.

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35. Edward O'Connor: The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church. Ava Maria Press. 1971.

production of competent theological works which took into account a much wider experience and progressed beyond the earlier testimony-type and apologetic publications. Nevertheless, it was no easy matter to find a framework within which to articulate the charismatic experience, and Donal Dorr recognises this "unresolved tension" in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal:

"The Charismatic Renewal emphasises religion as an experienced reality. Having expressed the love and power of God at work in their own hearts and lives, the people of the Renewal want to speak to themselves and others about this tangible work of the Spirit. To do so they need a language - that is, a coherent set of ideas and terms which they can use to articulate their experience. Unfortunately the theology of grace dominant in Catholicism between Trent and Vatican II tended to put grace in an area beyond our conscious experience; and this kind of language was quite unsuitable as an instrument for expressing the charismatic spirituality.

"It is not surprising then that even very loyal Catholics involved in this Renewal find they have to use the language of classical Pentecostalism to express some of their most significant religious experiences. This borrowed idiom carries over with it a good deal of what has been called cultural-theological 'baggage', that is, trappings and attitudes which characterise Pentecostalism, because of its origins and history ... at times it is only with considerable difficulty that Catholics can use this Pentecostal language to express their own spiritual experience. This awkwardness is evident at times in the way they speak about baptism in the Spirit." <sup>36</sup> (his italics)

There is another restraint which Catholic theologians fail to mention but which must place considerable pressure upon them, and this is the subtle

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36. Donal Dorr: Remove the Heart of Stone. Gill and MacMillan. 1978. p.55.

pressure to adhere to official doctrine. To be accepted, it is essential that the movement be based upon sound Catholic theology and this is one reason why the Catholic Renewal has been so keen to engage in theological study. Few theologians question the absorption of the charismatic experience into traditional theology, and Donald Gelpi was one of the few exceptions when he wrote:

"Interested Catholics should be alerted to the dangers latent in any attempt to force the Pentecostal experience into a procrustian bed of 'traditional' Catholic theological concepts."  
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There has been no jettisoning of theology as in certain areas of the Protestant Charismatic Movement. Attitudes to theology are essentially positive, and as Donal Dorr states concerning testimony-type writing:

"Even where it is found helpful it is not a substitute for theology. Testimony can be so subjective that it lacks balance. A certain tranquillity and distancing is required if one is to articulate and interpret the Christian experience accurately and fruitfully."  
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Dorr states that the theological renewal of the sixties in Catholicism broke down the thought system which prevented people seeing the importance or even the possibility of experiencing grace<sup>39</sup>. But this new theological approach to grace developed too late for charismatics to find in it an alternative to adopting the idiom of Pentecostalism. The new approach

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37. Donald Gelpi: Pentecostalism: A Theological Viewpoint. Paulist Press. 1971. p.156.

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38. op.cit.36. p.5.

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39. op.cit.36. p.18.



justifies the use of the phrase 'experience of grace', and Dorr hopes for a fruitful dialogue between the Pentecostal spirituality and a spirituality articulated in terms of this new theology of grace:

"The new theology of grace has emerged as part of a rethink of the basic framework of our understanding of the faith. It fits in with a new theology of revelation, of faith, of history, and especially of the relationship between God and the world. It finds its deep roots in the personalist and existentialist understanding of what it means to be human."

'Grace' now means any or all of the gifts of God, for the Giver is now recognised in the gift. 'Grace' thus means God making Himself personally present to the individual in a variety of different ways. Language presents a problem in expressing grace because it is too limiting, but Dorr describes the experience of grace as the personal discovery of a link between the world and a transcendent beyond. Human language, he believes, cannot adequately describe the character of that link since words and meanings apply to the realities and relationships of this world. This concept of a divide between this world and the sphere inhabited by God is characteristic of Catholic theology. On the one hand, Dorr seems to be breaking down this divide with his concept of grace, whilst on the other he reinforces it by saying that human expression and understanding virtually erect a barrier by means of their inadequacies:

"It seems better to think in terms of a religious mood or mode of consciousness. For the person in this mood or mode, an awareness of God permeates every level of consciousness." <sup>40</sup> (his italics)

In suggesting two states of mind or being, one of which can contain an awareness of God, the other of which cannot, Dorr perpetuates the divide which the experience of charismatic renewal has broken down in practice. Kilian McDonnell is also critical of any separation of nature and grace which portrays God as making "dashes into history, sorties or forays into

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40. op.cit.36. pp.11-15.

time", but being essentially at home outside both history and time. He corrects this by saying that he would:

" ... view the relation of nature and grace as more wholistic, emphasizing the unity of all reality and the presence of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in the whole universe. God does not make sorties into history. While he is not identified with time and history, they are also his proper home." <sup>41</sup>

Dorr is certainly one of the less reticent theologians when it comes to questioning traditional theology, and Heribert Muhlen is more typical:

" ... there is no new charismatic theology; we are seeking and pleading for an awakening and a renewal of the whole Church and the individual Christian, on the basis of the teachings and practice of our Churches ..."

" ... The charismatic renewal in the Church has no 'founder', no spiritual centre, no special theology (other than its perception of the partialities of traditional theology)." <sup>42</sup> (my italics)

There is anxiety lest it be thought that there is any questioning or modifying of traditional theology. Any 'charismatic theology' must fit into Catholic theology, simply because there can be no question of Catholic theology being wrong. Again, David Parry is careful to emphasize:

"Our judgment on this movement should not be based on bizarre stories (true or not), and odd personalities, but on an examination of its basic teaching, and the qualities of its best teachers, and the consequences of their teaching ... Essentially

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41. Kilian McDonnell: Charismatic Renewal and the Churches. Seabury Press. 1976.

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42. Heribert Muhlen: A Charismatic Theology. Burns and Oates. 1978. pp.8,15-16.

the Charismatic Movement proclaims, not a new doctrine nor even a startling evolution of doctrine, but rather an event." <sup>43</sup> (my italics)

And the Malines Document clearly states that:

"The renewal maintains that, in terms of theological reality, it has brought nothing new to the Church." <sup>44</sup>

Derek Lance provides a neat way around the whole problem of theological discrepancies by stating in the context of a discussion about the existence of charisms:

"One of the problems has been that, over the centuries, we forgot our theology." <sup>45</sup>

So the problem can be solved by claiming that particular points were inherent in Catholic theology and thus are not new innovations. Peter Hocken is more realistic in recognising that all is not yet mapped-out. After a review of classical Pentecostal theology, he comments:

"... the writings of Catholics caught up in the Pentecostal movement show that it is possible to exercise spiritual gifts and to develop elements of Pentecostal practice without subscribing to the theological understanding that classical Pentecostals have

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43. David Parry: Not Mad, Most Noble Festus. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1979. p.4.

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44. Theological and Pastoral Orientations on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. (The Malines Document.) Word of Life. 1974. p.37.

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45. Derek Lance: Charismatic Renewal: Is It Really Catholic?. Mayhew-McCrimmon. 1978. p.17.

taken over from their Protestant origins ...

"The greater openness of the Catholic tradition towards nature and creation can ground a different and more flexible understanding of Pentecostalism's potential ...

"What contribution is this proposing for Catholic theology? I am not simply concerned to affirm the mutual compatibility of Catholic faith and Pentecostal praxis. Nor am I suggesting that Catholics have a ready-made theology of nature and grace, of creation and redemption, that can be neatly inserted as a replacement for present Pentecostal theory. What I do believe is that a Catholic starting-point reveals exciting possibilities in exposing the limitations and distortions that arise from a definitive theological self-understanding. The distinctive features of Pentecostalism examined above are intended to show how a different theological approach can reveal perhaps unsuspected potential and how features of Pentecostal life can introduce a new dimension into the wider ecumenical debate, e.g. on Scripture and tradition; on world and sacrament, on objective doctrine and subjective experience.

"Some Catholic presentations, no doubt influenced by apologetic concerns, are too complacent in their explanations of the compatibility of Pentecostalism and Catholicism; these, e.g. some statements on 'Baptism in the Spirit', are often at the level of Pentecostal terminology, which inevitably reflects a theology, and in too uncritical an affirmation of compatibility fail to appreciate the size of the theological task demanded by the whole pentecostal experience. The theological work is only just starting and it may be many years before it reaches maturity!" <sup>46</sup> (my italics)

He seems more open to the possibility of clear restatements of some aspects

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46. Peter Hocken: op.cit.2. pp.38-39.

of doctrine, and is not over-defensive about Catholic theology. The theological differences in Catholicism at the present time leave future theological developments wide open. Subtle wording and delicate ambiguities mask irreconcilable differences of opinion, and what David Wells describes as "the almost esoteric nature of Catholic theological language"<sup>47</sup> tends to distance theology from the 'man in the street'. It remains to be seen how long this situation will be acceptable to all parties. Wells comments further:

"... future diversity may occur as the Church acknowledges the insufficiency of her grasp on truth. And this is a theological matter. When truth becomes less distinct, when the sharp lines which traditional theologians drew become blurred, the Church is correspondingly forced to be less comprehensive in its proclamation and teaching. This theological shift is consonant with the general shift in emphasis from the objective ecclesiastical teaching to the subjective religious disposition."

<sup>48</sup> (my italics)

This shift which Wells detected in 1973 is conducive to the emphasis of the Charismatic Movement, and the latter may well have contributed to it. The observer Gerard Noel assesses the distinctive trends of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal as follows:

"Theologically there is an element of the simplistic and fundamental in charismaticism. On the other hand, the renewal is now a fully clerical-lay partnership and no theological objections have proved conclusive. It is often a matter of personal feelings, temperament and private opinion. The most surprising kinds of people suddenly find themselves carried away into the excitement and consolation of renewal. Others find it

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47. David Wells: Revolution In Rome. Tyndale Press. 1973. p.121.

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48. op.cit.47. p.103.

repellent. Conservatives tend to believe that it is too 'liberal' whereas, for example, it is so far notably cool toward the 'new theology' and is thought by many liberals to be woefully unaware of social injustice and the concomitant duties of Christians. It appears, however, that as the yeast works its way through the dough, these other factors begin to balance themselves out."<sup>49</sup>

Donal Dorr offers a deeper and more integrated analysis. As he sees it, the Charismatic Renewal is basically conservative on doctrinal and theological issues. Although partly resulting from the influence of classical Pentecostalism, it is more fundamentally a reaction against the secularist type of theology which was so insistent on the autonomy of the world that it allowed little close personal involvement by God in everyday life. For people who were discovering that the guidance of the Holy Spirit went beyond a general set of rules and that prayers for healing could be answered, this theology proved inadequate. This leads him to suggest that a theological outlook which seems conservative should be explained not so much as a conservative clinging to the past, but rather in terms of a "spiritual pragmatism". A position is accepted primarily because it appears to fit in with the religious experience of the participants. He illustrates this by stating that the outlook tends to be rather liberal in liturgical matters, conservative with regard to evil spirits, and borrowed from a different tradition as regards praying in tongues. In one sense the theology guides the practice, but in a more basic sense the practice is the source of the theology. Here, Dorr has grasped a significant point. He regards this "spiritual pragmatism" as a quality which gives grounds for hope that the renewal will produce a more nuanced theology, less influenced by fundamentalism and more open to a conception of God's working through secondary causes. The basic condition for the acceptability of such a theology would be that it should nourish rather than undermine the religious experience of participants<sup>50</sup>.

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49. Gerard Noel: The Anatomy of the Catholic Church. Hodder and Stoughton. 1980. See pp.262-271.

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50. op.cit.36. pp.127-128.

Although the door to theological developments in Catholicism is guarded, it is not closed. Few charismatics feel that sufficient work has been done in the theological field, and the climate in the Church is more open to theological formulation than it has ever been. The Malines Document somewhat surprisingly recognises that there is not one particular view or theological approach which is to be deemed correct:

"Though others within the renewal might have somewhat different theological and pastoral views, the present statement represents one of the main streams of thought."<sup>51</sup>

A sharp contrast to the attitude to theology of the Catholic Charismatic Movement is provided by some of the house churches. In the Fullness circle in particular, it is an area in which the thought is somewhat blurred. Many of these people come from backgrounds where they felt that concern over theology and doctrine was not balanced by practical Christianity, and consequently there is a fear lest over-emphasis of theology should act as a diversion from God's purposes and future leading. Here also, the stress on flexibility is a strong influence: things may change and so there must not be over-certainty or dogmatism even in theology. Dogmatism is linked in the eyes of many with intolerance and a closed mind, and it is therefore considered better to avoid being too definite in delineating theology by means of concrete statements. It follows from this way of thinking that nothing can be invalidated simply because of its theology, and some of the statements made by people from this circle are confusing or contradictory:

"The pressure to form churches and hammer out theology means we miss the point of what God wants to do. Truth is a relative thing. I feel there is more truth to be revealed of God Himself and therefore don't want to be caught up in theology, when perhaps we only have ten per cent of what we could have. Things become clearer as this comes. We want to know God and get these things right, but want primarily to push ahead to a greater

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51. op.cit.44. p.v.

knowledge of God ..." 52

This illustrates the tension that exists concerning the place of theology: it is felt that concern for adequate theology and a progression towards greater personal knowledge of God are incompatible. There is feeling that the Church as a whole is caught up in foolish speculation, producing theology that has the form of religion but denies the power of it. Systematic theology is accordingly viewed with a certain degree of scepticism. One person commented:

"If God had wanted us to have systematic theology, it would have been." 53

It is felt that systematic theology is made too complete in that it makes assumptions where Scripture itself is not so clear. The possibility is envisaged of the Church becoming narrow and bigoted whilst the world has a wider knowledge, and there is a stress upon individuality created by God. Any attempt to make people conform to an image is disapproved of, and it is considered dangerous to make things too narrow or to seek too strict a conformity:

"Unity is more important than getting it right and understanding it all ... We don't have much hope for systems. Our hope's in God, in people, and in the Holy Spirit working in their hearts. We don't feel the need to recognise a system - ours or anyone else's - but we would recognise people who know God. We would recognise their searching for God in their own way. We emphasise how people care for one another rather than what they believe."  
54 (my italics)

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52. Interviews with people involved in Fullness circle fellowships. 1980.

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53. *ibid.*

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54. *ibid.*



It is practice rather than theory which occupies the dominant position. Systematic theology can ultimately be a negative rather than a positive influence because it can limit God. Furthermore, it can also be selective, and people may build their own God through it, or alternatively, their concept of God may be created for them. Either way, things tend to become too black and white, and it is this which makes people ill at ease. If pressed for details about some aspect which they feel cannot be closely defined, they prefer simply to say:

"We haven't got a doctrine on that." 55

Basically, what we have here is an unresolved dilemma. It is not theology in itself which is rejected, but the stifling of faith which this has been seen to produce. If they were able to hold together in a reliable balance theology and their sensitivity to spiritual progression, they would probably do so with some relief:

"Attempts to explain it all are not futile, but it is an adherence to them which is binding. They are helpful and reveal something of God, but let's not say it's the whole story." 56

Attempts at systematization or classification are therefore not necessarily superfluous or detrimental. Theology it is stressed, must allow for God to deal with each person individually and in His own way. In connection with this, the type of testimony literature which has featured prominently in the Charismatic Movement is felt to be of limited value, because the readers are frequently led to expect exactly the same experiences and chain of events to happen to them.

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55. *ibid.*

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56. *ibid.*

Primary doctrines such as the Deity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity, are firmly adhered to, and it is categorically stated that these cannot be done away with. It is the secondary issues that do not provoke strong feeling, and there is a willingness to sacrifice any strong feeling over such issues with allowance made for the fact that these may either be confirmed or refuted in coming years. It is notable how many people in this circle preface their statements with phrases such as:

"I feel/believe at this moment in time." 57

They feel that it is often the case when the Church comes to an understanding of truth and of God that it 'builds a hedge around it', resulting in such a narrowness that God cannot express Himself through it. The Church wishes to remain at highpoints, rather than to keep going. It is also felt that the Church tends to be too defensive concerning theology and rigorously defends "truth" as if God Himself needs defending. This is in stark contrast to the typical response of people in this circle:

"If people know God and are walking according to the light they've got, they are doing as well as we are." 58

"Knowing God" is the operative factor, but there is frequently no clear explanation of what this consists of with regard to objective criteria, and the dangers here are obvious. Without clear definition, anyone may "know God" on any basis. As might be expected, there is impatience over any emphasis upon doctrinal agreement as the only basis for unity.

The simplest explanation of the theological approach exemplified here is found in the attitude of flexibility and openness to change and development, which is applied to theology as it is to every other area. This is inevitable if there is to be consistency, and the theological

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57. *ibid.*

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58. *ibid.*

approach described above needs to be considered within this context. The theological influences within this circle are many and varied. Unlike some other house church groupings, outside influences are often valued and are viewed with an open mind and the attitude that there may well be something of value in them. New understanding may be found in virtually anything and sometimes this almost verges on pantheism. Many Christians find no problem whatsoever in combining emphasis upon theological understanding and correctness with an openness to God's leading, so why should it pose such a dilemma for some house church people? The cause is undoubtedly to be found in their reasons for leaving denominationalism: their conviction that there was no allowance within the system for God's working and their obsession with avoiding anything that might hinder them again. Whilst wanting to keep theology in the background, many of them do, however, feel uncomfortable about rejecting it altogether, and such people hold to an extremely awkward position, reluctantly allowing it a place yet simultaneously trying to repress it. Fullness magazine contains much detailed teaching, the stress being clearly upon the practical application of this and upon the 'prophetic' role of the Christian community. The question and answer page is particularly helpful in indicating specific issues about which people seek clarity. These elicit a clear and detailed response from the Fullness writers, which is sometimes not so apparent in the articles. The following is particularly illuminating:

"Q. Do we need to establish a body of accepted doctrine - a kind of end-time confession of faith?

"A. I do not accept the need for doctrine or dogma as they are often understood.

"In place of a static body of one-for-all defined doctrine, I see the need for the proceeding word of God to be expressed to each succeeding generation by foundational ministry ... I do not accept the Roman Catholic assertion of unchangeable doctrines established by the institutional church. Nor do I accept the liberal Protestant idea of the constant evolution of doctrine, which inevitably becomes more dimly related to the Bible. I believe in an on-going process, not of evolution, but of

discovery. The Spirit of God works in harmony with the principles of the Scriptures, revealing those principles ever more fully to the Church ... Ground won and advances made in the past must always be gratefully received, but there must also be a pioneering, a pressing on into new territory. By 'new', I do not mean newly created, but newly possessed.

"There is a danger in the idea that we can have an accumulated body of theoretical doctrine divorced from life. The accumulation must rather be in the life and experience of the Church. The word must be built into the Body of Christ. Just as God spoke and the universe was formed, so now he speaks and the manifest result is not theoretical, but practical and real. This result is the Church." 59

In volume 18 of Fullness, the Question and Answer page adopted a deliberate policy of dealing with practical problems relating to "life in the Kingdom of God", whereas before it dealt particularly with theological and doctrinal problems. This reflects the present climate in the Fullness circle, which has also circulated a number of booklets that reveal a certain impatience with theology:

"We realise that Christians can learn mentally all the correct terminology and thereby bluff themselves into imagining that they're practising what they're arguing for! But just think how disciples in the first generation of the church lived in glorious triumph before Paul ever expounded the doctrine of it in his letter to Rome." 60

"Men have piled up converts on the wrong foundation: they have built on doctrines and creeds instead of friendship and

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59. John MacLauchlan: "Q and A". Fullness. Vol.13. p.12.

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60. Gerald Coates and Hugh Thompson: Not Under Law. Private publication.

revelation ... They have taught men's minds without changing their hearts ... The Lord Jesus and the new birth are the starting point of fellowship and building, not doctrine." <sup>61</sup>

These writers are creating a dichotomy which does not necessarily exist, and they fail to maintain an objective balance by swinging too far to the opposite extreme in their attempt to correct what they feel is an over-emphasis of doctrine.

Other house church circles have a much more positive attitude to theology and generally speaking, the more exclusive the group, the more concerned it is with its theology and doctrine. A noteworthy feature of the house churches is the participation in them of a considerable number of people who have studied theology at university or attended one of the various Bible Colleges. These people tend to be more prepared to discuss questions of theology and theory, but the vast majority of them now regard their Bible College training as too theoretical, some only doing so with hindsight, others having felt so at the time. This has resulted in a reaction against the Bible Colleges, and the stress upon correct doctrine and theological explanation is described as an over-emphasis and as detrimental to Christian growth. Insufficient attention was given to other aspects of Christianity such as the joy of knowing God, and freedom from bondage to a legalistic system. One person stated that Bible College had had an adverse effect on her, presenting an unrealistic approach to the Christian life which left her depressed and unable to accept herself as she was. It is difficult to say whether such people joined the house churches because they felt this way, or whether they came to feel this after joining a house church and absorbing a negative attitude towards theology which they found there. Probably both factors are involvd to varying degrees, and it is impossible to separate them. Former students of theology in universities feel very much the same. Involved discussion about theology, although interesting and perhaps intellectually satisfying, can be a waste of time in that it may lead to excessive dogmatism and can become an obsession which detracts from the practical expression of Christianity, and

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61. John Noble: First Apostles, Last Apostles. Private publication.

the communication of the faith to those around. Most enjoyed their theology courses and found them worthwhile, but largely unrelated to their Christian lives. The desire is often expressed of seeing a general break-down in every area of life between the sacred and the secular, and a "non-religious Christianity". Many of these people had been involved in evangelical Christian Unions and now feel that the detailed attention to theology and the hesitation about the orthodoxy of those who did not totally conform was a waste of time and resulted in bigotry and prejudice. Whilst reacting against Bible Colleges, traditional church structures and 'rigid systems', both theological and organizational, many still retain their interest in theology and the Scriptures. However, although personally preferring to understand things in a methodical way, they accept that other people may not want to do this and state that their position is just as legitimate.

Just as there are different theologians, there are thus different attitudes to theology, and the combination of these two factors contributes to the Charismatic Movement's openness to people of differing theological persuasions. No one is automatically excluded on account of their theology, and the test is increasingly becoming one not of theology or experience, but rather of determining whether one is living under the Lordship of Christ. The house churches have particularly contributed to the emergence of this emphasis. There is often acknowledgement that theology in the Charismatic Movement has been inadequate, but it is the rating of the importance of theology which is a significant factor. It is not understood as the crucial factor, but is placed alongside the outworking of Christianity and is secondary to the Lordship of Christ in a person's life. There is perhaps only a very delicate distinction to be made between disagreement about the role of theology in itself, and difference in the degree of emphasis and importance placed upon it. But the one inevitably affects the other.

As in many other areas of contemporary Church life, attitudes to theology in the Charismatic Movement are very much in need of balance. In seeking to redress the balance by emphasizing neglected aspects, it is frequently tipped too far in the opposite direction, and the Charismatic Movement has done this through its limited performance in the theological

field. Some of the house churches have made matters worse by their outspokenness, and indeed this may have given them the reputation of denigrating theology more than they actually do. Perhaps when their emphasis upon practical experience and outworking of Christianity - a valid emphasis in itself - has become more fully integrated into the modern understanding of Christianity, they will swing back to a more positive attitude towards theology.

The problems facing the Charismatic Movement in articulating a theology are not only immense because of the diversity within the movement. Current theology is somewhat inadequate when faced with the task of giving detailed expression to Christian experience. It is ill-equipped to deal with the realm of the paralogical, and is at a loss in coping with an apparent oneness between Christians of seemingly contrary theological and ecclesiastical persuasions. The theological framework is not there and it is not surprising that so much questionable theology has arisen in well-meaning attempts to fill this vacuum.

The Charismatic Movement's absence of theological unanimity is disconcerting to some observers, and the movement as a whole will remain unacceptable to many people whilst such diversity of theology exists. The current state of affairs is unsatisfactory, and will remain so unless there is more serious theological deliberation. Theology is too basic an issue to be relegated to the sidelines, for the very nature of Man as a thinking being makes it necessary. Whilst it is of the utmost importance that a Christian should know God, one also needs to know about whom one knows, and to understand the nature and purposes of His dealings with people. Like it or not, theology is needed - and someone has to do the thinking.

Chapter 4.ATTITUDE TO THE BIBLE

One of the features of the Charismatic Movement has been a renewed interest in the Bible and an eagerness on the part of participants to spend time reading it. Indeed, the charismatic experience invariably either initiates or restores a person's interest in detailed Bible study, and this is often accompanied by a fresh realization of the efficacy of prayer and of the reality of this means of communication with God. This is a factor which is immediately striking when one hears people's testimonies to their charismatic experience, for it is one which is nearly always mentioned by both Catholics and Protestants. Its recurrence throughout the personal testimonies to charismatic renewal recounted by Catholic priests in Anointed With the Spirit is particularly striking:

"I had been told that the baptism of the Spirit would open my eyes to the Scriptures in ways I had never suspected. I can testify to the truth of that."

"The little study of Scripture I had done previously was dry and academic; now it is a joy to read and hear what Jesus did and what he is doing in the world today."

"Immediately after my baptism in the Spirit, I craved to know God in Sacred Scripture. I became an avid reader of the Bible, and read it through for the first time. To be able to depend in faith on the Word of God was an invaluable aid to my discernment, especially when counselling others."

"The Word of God ... became inspiring, appealing, refreshing, and I found myself constantly reaching for the Scriptures."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ian Murray, Anthony Davies, Sean Conaty, Anthony Meredith: Anointed With The Spirit. Mayhew-McCrimmon, 1978. pp.18, 23, 41-42, 62.



Cardinal Suenens states:

"The Renewal helps me to open the Bible often in the day and to read it with a new taste and a new expectation." <sup>2</sup>

And as a representative of the Protestant Movement, Michael Harper writes that one of the effects of baptism in the Spirit should be a fuller grasp of Christian doctrine and the Bible<sup>3</sup>.

This emphasis upon individual reading of the Bible is particularly notable in the Catholic Renewal because it is an element which has not been as evident in Catholicism as it has been in Protestantism. The impact made by this new stress can be noted in Goodnews, which reported in 1977 that weekend meetings had been held in Liverpool and near Leeds, specifically to focus on Scripture. These meetings emphasised the reading and study of the Bible as the living word of God, and advocated the daily reading of Scripture, preceded by prayer. The Documentary Theory of the Pentateuch was also explained (and by implication upheld), and one gains the impression that any study of the Bible whatsoever was a new experience for the Catholic laity<sup>4</sup>. A Goodnews report on the Worth Abbey conference of August 1977 stated:

"The purpose of the Charismatic Renewal is to bring its adherents to a deeper awareness of God's action in their lives and to the importance of prayer and study of the Bible as the revealed Word of God." <sup>5</sup>

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2. Cardinal Suenens: A New Pentecost?. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1975. p.219.

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3. Michael Harper: Let My People Grow. Hodder and Stoughton. 1977. p.7.

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4. Goodnews. No.10. June/July 1977.

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5. Goodnews. No.11. Aug/Sept 1977.

(It should be noted at this point that in references to the Bible or the Scriptures, Catholics also include the Apocrypha.) A later edition saw the publication of an article about Scripture entitled "The Living Word of God", in which it was stated:

"The word of God is alive and active ... Do we realise the wonderful inheritance left to us in Scripture, which is part of the soul food for the child of God, or if we are not fed we will die of starvation? Is this happening? Perhaps we are not aware of it?

"In turning to the scriptures, we begin our spiritual walk with Jesus ... We mustn't be afraid to turn to God's word. Reading it in the flesh, it may be dry and not very meaningful, but reading it in the Spirit, it becomes very much alive and exciting ... One of the most fascinating things that I have discovered through my brief encounter with the Scriptures, is that they are true, they are alive, they do affect our whole lives, they cut to the very heart ... We are led to read and pray the scriptures daily, which is building up a very deep prayer life ... Surely this is telling us something of the urgency for more Bible Study groups, for personal growth and the growth of our prayer groups ..."<sup>6</sup>  
 (their italics)

What is the reason for this new interest in the Scriptures? Ian Petit sheds some light on this in one of his articles:

"As one begins to grasp the goodness of God in giving us these beautiful gifts of the Spirit, so also the idea that God loves us, is for us and truly wants to help us, begins to dawn. This has brought a thirst for understanding the scripture, a desire to know more about prayer and the ways of the spiritual life."<sup>7</sup>

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6. "The Living Word of God". Goodnews. No.15. April/May 1978.

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7. Ian Petit: Goodnews, No.11. Aug/Sept 1977.

The experience of the gifts of the Spirit brings a new awareness of the reality and immediacy of God, and creates within the individual a desire to know more about Him and to 'discover' the Scriptures as a consequence. This is true for both Catholics and Protestants. David Parry emphasises the importance of regular reading of the Bible and describes the difference which a charismatic experience will make:

"We have to continue to make progress in our knowledge of spiritual things by frequent reading of Holy Scripture. This may be new for us, or again we may have the advantage of an already extensive knowledge of it. Either way the 'release of the Spirit in us' provides a keen edge to our understanding - the Spirit seems to make His meaning stand out more clearly, more sharply, from the written text, so that we discover that it is inspired indeed. Not all Scripture will necessarily come alive simultaneously; it may do this bit by bit. We have to do our share of the work, but we are conscious of being helped in it." 8

Catholic charismatics always emphasise that the experience of Charismatic Renewal is firmly rooted in the Bible, and the Life in the Spirit Seminars Team Manual takes care to give Bible references for each point it presents, stating the importance of being able to indicate the passages in which a particular teaching is found.

The Charismatic Renewal appears to have filled a void with relation to the Bible as far as the Catholic laity is concerned. The reading of Scripture is an important element in most of the prayer meetings and this is often followed by teaching based upon the passages that have been read. It is noted that people's hunger for Scripture and understanding is inadequately catered for by sermons, discussion groups, courses and normal parish structures<sup>9</sup>, and Ian Petit states that if people who call Jesus

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8. David Parry: This Promise Is For You. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1977. p.133.

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9. Michael Fitzgerald: "The Role of teaching in the Life of a Prayer Group". Newsletter. Nov 1974.

their Saviour are asked what He has saved them from, they will not know because they are starved of the Word<sup>10</sup>. Commenting that people are rediscovering their Bibles as a result of their involvement in Charismatic Renewal, Cardinal Suenens states that Protestants owe what is best in their religious tradition to their daily reading of the Bible. Catholics too, he says, must learn to listen to the Word of God<sup>11</sup>.

This noticeable trend in Catholic charismatic renewal has been considered by some to be a mark of the Catholic Church as a whole and not just of its charismatic element. Edward O'Connor comments upon the "Biblical Movement" which followed the Liturgical and Lay Movements and preceded the Ecumenical Movement in Catholicism. He regards this movement as having restored Scripture to its due place in Catholic life and theology and prepared for the Charismatic Movement - not so much by directing attention to the Holy Spirit as by anticipating one of the most characteristic fruits of the Renewal, the desire to read the Bible. He writes:

"The most significant effect of the biblical movement was to convince numbers of people, both clergy and laity, of the need to read Scripture regularly and prayerfully, not as an historical document, but as the living Word of the heavenly Father. The resulting familiar contact with the Gospel message helped many people to recognise the authenticity of the charismatic renewal."<sup>12</sup>

David Watson has also noted that many sections of the Church, including Catholicism, have seen a return to the sufficiency of the Bible for the

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10. Ian Petit: Goodnews. No.5. Aug/Sept 1971.

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11. op.cit.2. pp.98,39.

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12. Edward O'Connor in Vinson Synan (Ed.): Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins. Logos International. 1975. p179.

details of the Christian faith<sup>13</sup>. Many Protestants find this an encouraging sign of God's working in the Catholic Church and regard it as evidence of the authenticity of the Charismatic Renewal. David Wells, however, is more hesitant and feels that the attitude of the New Catholicism towards Scripture may well nullify the effect of this apparent increased concern with Scripture. He points out that the availability of Scripture and the widespread deference to it in Protestant circles has not guaranteed a return to historic belief<sup>14</sup>.

Generally speaking, the Charismatic Movement has served to bring the Bible into a central position in the lives of charismatically renewed Christians<sup>15</sup>, if indeed it had not already occupied such a position. This has resulted in a characteristically conservative theology. But what of the Movement's position concerning the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture? The main denominational groupings have stated that they adhere to both biblical inerrancy and biblical infallibility. Great importance is attached to the authority of Scripture and to the constant need to measure up doctrine and practice against biblical teaching. Tom Smail emphasises the necessity of being both scriptural and realistic, and he believes that there needs to be a simple adherence to the word and promise of Jesus as contained in Scripture<sup>16</sup>. Michael Harper stresses that Scripture is the authoritative Word of God, and he sees the Bible as a powerful and living Word. For example, when "proclaimed in the Holy Spirit", the word of God (contained in the Bible) forces Satan's power into the open and reveals the

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13. David Watson: I Believe in the Church. Hodder and Stoughton. 1979. p.45.

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14. David Wells: Revolution in Rome. Tyndale Press. 1973. p.108.

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15. This is immediately evident when listening to participants giving 'testimony' to the effects of their charismatic experience.

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16. Tom Smail: Editorial. Renewal. No.65. Oct/Nov 1976. p.3.

presence of his influence<sup>17</sup>. He writes:

"It is no coincidence that the greatest in-roads of satanic deception through the cults has taken place at the same time as modernism has undermined man's confidence in the word of God. If we depart from this standard, we will be like a ship breaking from its moorings in a gale ... Without this anchor we will inevitably suffer shipwreck." <sup>18</sup>

On the face of it, it therefore seems that the authority of the Bible is firmly upheld. But it is questionable whether this is always really so in practice? One wonders how representative of the Charismatic Renewal George Every is when he writes:

"It is a great mistake to imagine that belief in the inspiration of prophets, apostles and evangelists, and in the operation of the Holy Spirit in the interpretation of Scripture, must necessarily involve belief in the literal accuracy of every statement in the Old and New Testament that appears to describe a fact." <sup>19</sup>

Because the movement claims a scriptural basis for its emphases and justifies its beliefs and doctrines by recourse to biblical texts, one certainly gains the impression that it is Bible-centred. Yet there is sometimes a blurring of distinctions and a lack of clarity which results in ambiguity concerning fundamental issues. In spite of statements confirming the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible, a closer examination reveals

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17. Michael Harper. Spiritual Warfare. Hodder and Stoughton. 1970. p.76.

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18. op.cit.17. pp.69-70.

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19. Simon Tugwell in Peter Hocken et al: New Heaven? New Earth?. Darton, Longman and Todd, 1976. p.190.

some uncertainty and even contradiction. Some house church members are disillusioned with detailed study of the Bible on the grounds that it takes one's attention away from seeking God's leading in day-to-day life. There is a certain awkwardness about their attitude to Scripture as a result of this. Although recognising that the Bible is important as God's Word, because they fear narrow and exclusive attitudes they will accept it as God's Word only in a more generalized sense. There is hesitation over detailed study simply for the sake of it; if study is necessary for clear, practical application, this is acceptable, but such an end must necessarily be kept in view. An uneasy balance is sought between accepting the Bible as God's Word, and being sufficiently broad in interpretation so as to avoid the exclusivism of claiming to have the biblical doctrine or pattern. A comment in Fullness by John MacLauchlin illustrates this:

"The Bible is not a text-book; rather it embodies the principles of the heart, mind, will and purpose of God. These principles must be received and expressed anew in each generation of the Church ... The Spirit of God works in harmony with the principles of the Scriptures, revealing those principles ever more fully to the Church." <sup>20</sup> (my italics)

This statement could be interpreted either as supporting Biblical infallibility or as undermining it. Its author is rather unspecific, leaving the possibility of further revelation open, and this has definite implications about the status of the Bible. For that reason, the latter interpretation is more appropriate, whatever the intentions of the writer. George Tarleton, the leader of a house church in London, defines what he regards to be wrong attitudes to the Bible. He decries "bibliolatry" and efforts to produce 'Bible-centred' churches, stating that the present leading of the Spirit has restored the Holy Spirit to His rightful place in the Trinity, which previously could be more accurately described as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Scripture. He also criticises "bibliomancy", which he describes as the twin of bibliolatry and defines as the treating of Scripture in a superstitious way. Believing that wrong

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20. John MacLauchlin: "Q & A". Fullness: Vol.13. p.13.

attitudes to the Bible such as these stem from a "religious approach", Tarleton elaborates as follows:

"We have come to believe that we cannot exist without that mysterious external 'something' the reading of the scripture imparts. The early Christians seemed to get along very well without the Bible. They did not have ready access to the Old Testament scrolls ... Yet they seemed to grow in leaps and bounds when compared with most of their 20th century counterparts. In his second letter, Peter tells us that we have been granted 'everything pertaining to life and godliness' when we become partakers of the divine nature. Reading the Bible does not add to that, because it cannot. What it does do, is to confirm that what we have is of God. It's the most objective test we have, not in a static sense, but in a living way." <sup>21</sup>

Scripture's primary role of being revelatory is thereby reduced to the secondary role of being merely confirmatory. Tarleton is worried lest it be assumed that knowing Scripture is the same thing as knowing God, and, probably because of this, he criticises any emphasis upon precision in the quotation of Scripture and claims that it would be quite foreign to the minds of the biblical writers. One's approach to the Scriptures should not resemble the "nit-picking" of the scribes and pharisees, but the "more generous attitude" displayed by the New Testament writers. To illustrate this, he states that Peter both altered and added to the prophecy of Joel when he referred to it at Pentecost. Furthermore, he points out that God's Word is more than words, and is a person. Once the fact that Jesus is the Word has been grasped, he feels that the Scriptures will begin to take their rightful place. Tarleton clearly regards this rightful place as one that is subordinate not just to the Godhead but also to other aspects of faith and experience, and in his belief that the Scriptures have been made too central, he effectively relegates them. He brings several other points to the reader's attention:

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21. George Tarleton: "What Is The Word of God?" Fullness. Vol.13. pp.7-8.



" ... the character of each of the 40 or more authors of the Bible has been preserved in the 66 books they produced. Even their idiosyncracies come through ... None of the writers seemed conscious that they were writing the Bible least of all Luke. 'It seemed good to me' appears to be rather a lame excuse for presenting us with his excellent gospel.

"It is also good to remember that these men were not writing a scientific manual. The Bible lacks the precision that the scientist likes, while at the same time giving him some amazing scientific facts. Things are not true because they are in the Bible, but they are in the Bible because they are true.

"The thing that displeases theologians is that God deliberately chose not to systematize what he wanted to say into a list of doctrines. They have been writing their books of systematic theology ever since to show their disapproval! With their tidy minds, they gather up all the biblical material that fits in with their preconceived ideas, eg, Calvinistic, Arminian, etc. Their efforts to tie the whole thing up are contrary to the way the Lord works, he seems to leave a lot of loose ends lying around."  
(my italics)

By stating that things are not true simply because they are in the Bible, Tarleton is casting doubt upon the inerrancy of Scripture. He is trying to avoid any possibility of dogmatic narrowness, but it is debatable whether the distinctions he seeks to make are viable ones.

By contrast, Michael Harper constantly reiterates the authority of the Bible. His own experience of baptism in the Spirit resulted in a fresh awareness of the availability of what the New Testament portrays, and he is convinced that if Christians read the Bible impartially and without prejudice, they will reach the same conclusion. He states that the Bible as the Word of God is "the main safeguard" against excess and imbalance, and emphasises the primacy of Scripture.

" ... God in his wisdom has given to the Church not only the

inner testimony of the Holy Spirit, but also the outward one of the Scriptures. And the two agree. When they don't agree, something is wrong. For the Holy Spirit who inspired men to write the Scriptures will never lead people to disobey them or act independently of them." <sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, the Bible must be considered in its entirety in order to avoid lack of balance, and Harper speaks of the necessity of embracing and obeying 'the whole counsel of God':

"Just as some are tempted to take their theological scissors and excise the chapters on spiritual gifts in the New Testament, so others are tempted to major on these very chapters and so neglect the rest of the Bible - as if spiritual gifts are the only matters worth being concerned about. This is all the more dangerous when these chapters become the subject of much controversy. People are tempted to spend far too much time discussing them." <sup>23</sup>

Harper's solution is in the regular, disciplined reading of all of the contents of Scripture, and not just those passages which deal with favourite topics. A concentration on spiritual gifts alone may actually retard rather than advance the spiritual growth of Christians unless it is balanced by solid and systematic instruction that covers the entire Bible<sup>24</sup>. He does his best to consider topics in the light of the whole of the Bible, and an example of this approach can be found in his examination of the 'discipling system' of Juan Carlos Ortiz. Noting that Ortiz derives his mandate for the use of the term 'discipling' from Mt.ch.28.vv.19-20,

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22. Michael Harper: As At The Beginning. Hodder and Stoughton. 1965. p.118.

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23. *ibid.*

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24. *op.cit.*22. p.120

Harper points out that this term is never used in the New Testament to describe the relationship which Christians may have with one another. He has no qualms about describing contemporary usage as "biblically unsound" and considers that it is advisable to avoid the 'discipling' terminology altogether, both because of its unsoundness and because of the "inappropriate" authority factor involved<sup>25</sup>. Harper has recognised from the start the importance of affirming the authority and primacy of Scripture. He has insisted upon the centrality of the Bible as the Word of God by means of which one's relationship with God may deepen, and as a safeguard against imbalance. His careful and honest approach to the Bible has undoubtedly influenced many involved in the charismatic Movement, and his insistence upon analysing issues on a biblical basis may well have acted as a stabilizing influence for people who tended to be carried away by feelings and experiences that were unaccompanied by more objective considerations. His stress upon the importance of regular reading of all parts of the Bible is one which has been taken up by most groups in the Charismatic Movement. Bible study and exposition are central features of most meetings, and the majority of people stress the importance they place upon their individual times of prayer and Bible Study. However, some areas of the House Church Movement are strikingly different in this respect and the desire of participants to avoid legalism in their relationship with God leads them to avoid setting aside regular times for prayer and Bible study. For some, surprisingly, it becomes only an occasional occurrence, but this depends very much on the background of the individual. Those who have had the importance of regular "quiet times" impressed upon them tend to be the ones who react the most against any regular system. This lack of regular prayer and Bible reading in some groups contrasts with the trend in Catholic charismatic circles recorded by Cardinal Suenens:"

"We are discovering again the wealth of the Word as a means of entering into contact with God. The Lord can give to him who humbly asks and opens his Bible in faith, a word for the day, his daily bread, upon which he can reflect and be nourished. More and more we see Christians who carry with them a copy of the New

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25. op.cit.3. p.152.

Testament, and who find time each day to read it prayerfully."<sup>26</sup>

Catholic charismatics remain true to the practice of their church in looking not only to the Bible for authority and revelation, but also to the self-consciousness and tradition which have developed through the ages in the Catholic Church and the hierarchy that upholds it. The Bible and Catholic tradition thus hold a dual authority, and the importance - and indeed the necessity - of the Church's teaching authority in the interpretation of Scripture compromises the authority accorded to Scripture. Although the promptings of the Holy Spirit are understood as coming about within the framework of the biblical statement of faith, it is the Church which decides what these biblical statements of faith are, and the resistance to change or correction which is inherent to a system that claims infallibility means that the Bible can never be accorded absolute authority. In spite of their new-found desire for Bible study and their honesty in approaching some questions of interpretation, most Catholic charismatics remain convinced that the Church's traditional doctrines and interpretations are the correct, biblical ones. However, it may be significant that it was in a book about the Catholic Charismatic Renewal that Rene Laurentin stated:

" ... classical Catholic theology has dealt loosely with the Scriptures; as a result, some highly traditional interpretations of the Bible make no sense by modern exegetical standards."<sup>27</sup>

It appears that the primacy of the Bible has been increasingly acknowledged in general terms in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, but Church tradition nevertheless tends to over-ride this when specific issues are encountered. David Parry is typical of the new awareness of Scripture amongst Catholic charismatics, and he distinguishes between scriptural and non-scriptural

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26. op.cit.2. p.191.

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27. Rene Laurentin: Catholic Pentecostalism. Darton, Longman and Todd, 1977. p.44.

writings:

"Scripture is not the only source from which 'the man of God becomes fully equipped and ready for any good work'. Today there are available many spiritual and theological works in which the latest insights into our faith are expounded ... It is advisable to read with a view to getting a good grasp of the doctrines of faith, or if we have that already, to bring our knowledge into line with the progress in the Church.

"What may be called classical spiritual works should not be thought of as out of date. They have their own degree of inspiration. This is at a great distance indeed from that of Holy Scripture and not of the same quality, for they do not add to or contain revelation ...

"Reading, then, Holy Scripture in the first place, and other works according to our possibilities and circumstances, will be one of the means through which the Holy Spirit communicates Himself in fresh lights to our souls. It should be a part of our lives." 28

However, the influence of presuppositions in biblical interpretation has been a hindrance to both Catholics and Protestants in the Charismatic Movement. Presuppositions for the Protestant charismatic are largely formed by his experience, for the Catholic charismatic by the Church's traditions which have been imbibed from an early age and have taken firm root.

Michael Harper recognises the danger of allowing tradition or experience to mould one's understanding of Scripture. He has this to say concerning principles to be followed in studying the Bible:

"The most vital one is that our search must be based on the

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28. op.cit.8. pp.134-135.

Scripture rather than the traditions of the Church or the experiences of men. Our traditions and experiences should be moulded by Scripture. We should not allow our experience (or our lack of experience) to judge the Scriptures. We should be careful too to see that our interpretation of the Scripture is taught us by the Holy Spirit and not the opinions of men. We must beware of 'traditional' interpretations." <sup>29</sup> (his italics)

Harper is writing in 1964 and shows clear recognition of prospective dangers, even at this early point. He believes that Scripture points clearly to the reality of the charismatic experience and that absence of this experience and the way that it has been discredited by tradition have discouraged people from seeking it. But there are no grounds for inferring that this is the reason for his stress upon the centrality of the Bible and its primacy over tradition and experience.

The Charismatic Movement has consistently claimed that its central charismatic experience is the same as that experienced in the New Testament church. It has been customary for adherents to cite 'proof-texts', and to seek to legitimize their experience by showing that it has been a recovery of an essential aspect of the New Testament Christian's life. The importance of the New Testament as a 'blueprint' for baptism in the Spirit and the practice of the gifts of the Spirit is therefore central to the movement, and in view of this one would expect that the movement would seek to apply New Testament blueprints to other areas and to adhere closely to a 'biblical pattern'. However, this is by no means the case, and the movement happily encompasses a variety of different patterns. It holds the belief that in many areas the Bible does not prescribe any particular pattern and that God does not necessarily want organization and practice to be universal. The baptism in the Spirit is the central feature of the movement and a 'biblical pattern' for even this is not so firmly upheld as in the earlier stages of the movement. Other matters are not felt to be categorically delineated, and hence there is much diversity. Maurice Smith is representative in his approach to the problem of deciding which of the

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29. Michael Harper: Power For the Body of Christ. Fountain Trust, 1964. p.13.

'biblical patterns' claimed by various groups today is the correct one:

"Who is right? How do they all fit together? How can we ever find the right pattern? This quest for the pattern has been the bane of so many Christians ...

"If only we could see that God is not revealing a dogmatic plan for us to apply with predicted results. He is not in the business-systems world where you stick the question in one end and the answer comes out at the other ... Everything it (the Bible) says is 100% right. But it is a means of testing your life and your guidance and not a means of getting them! ...

"It just isn't possible to tie up all the scriptures and make water-tight doctrines. You can try to do so with any subject from baptism in the Spirit to divine healing but you'll either give up in frustration, or come up with a rigid fundamentalism which has squeezed out all the mystery."<sup>30</sup>

This type of approach to the matter of 'blueprints' has become increasingly dominant over the years. Whilst a less rigid systematization is to be welcomed in some areas, such as that of Christian experience, in others it has paved the way for the attitude that 'anything goes'. As an example of the latter, mention may be made of the school of thought which stresses the Christian's duty to 'be himself' and govern his life according to how he 'feels led'.

Michael Harper<sup>31</sup> considers how far the New Testament is to be taken as a blueprint for today's church, in particular connection with the question whether the Scriptures referring to ministry in the Church have the same

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30. Maurice Smith: "Who's got the right biblical pattern?" Fullness. Vol.16. p.5.

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31. op.cit.3. pp.84,161-172.

kind of timeless authority as those which refer to the death and resurrection of Christ. He emphasizes that the nature of Scripture has both a divine and a human aspect, and that it is necessary to make allowance for both. A correct understanding of the Bible will see both these elements and maintain a balance between them, recognising too the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding one's understanding and interpretation. Harper warns against the use of the simplistic sentence, "It is the clear teaching of Scripture" in situations where the meaning is anything but clear. He believes it is also necessary to distinguish between what the Bible portrays as fixed and unalterable truth, unchanging either in the course of time or in the context of cultural variety, and the Bible's description of how the Holy Spirit inspired people in an 'ad hoc' situation. The distinction here is between what is mandatory and what is exemplary, and Harper illustrates this distinction with reference to what the New Testament says about apostles and bishops. Whereas it regards apostles as possessing a vital function in the ministry of the Church, there is no New Testament office approximating to the modern bishops. He concludes:

"If we were to follow slavishly the New Testament we should be looking earnestly for apostles, and looking askance at our bishops ... If the New Testament is our blueprint for ministry in the Church, all one can say is that it is a strange blueprint. There is a certain haphazardness about the appointments to office in the New Testament which only makes sense if you view them as the ad hoc promptings of the Holy Spirit, amidst the most taxing of circumstances." (his italics)

The Church was growing rapidly and spreading widely, and Harper feels that the New Testament writers were not interested in establishing a blueprint, but were more concerned with "life" than with close definitions of how the Church should be governed and who should perform particular functions. He again distinguishes between what is scriptural in the strict sense of 'office' and that which in terms of 'function' is truly in line with those mandatory principles which are established in the New Testament as norms for all time. The appointment of deacons in Acts ch.6 was the result of the Church responding to a particular situation, and Harper points to



fluidity even here in that Stephen soon began to behave like an apostle and Philip was soon fulfilling the role of an evangelist. There is no stereotype: Harper rather describes it as a flexibility to the movings of the Holy Spirit, commenting that even the word 'apostle' is used very freely. He points out that almost anyone from the exalted position of a Paul to the lowly messenger boy could at times be called an 'apostle', and it is therefore not easy to define the office as it was understood in the New Testament. As a result of these considerations, Harper reaches the following decisive conclusions:

"What in effect we do, if we make the New Testament into a blueprint is to wrest the scriptures by reading into them our own ideas and viewpoints. We also put them into cold storage. We try to 'freeze' them in the first century and re-create 'New Testament' churches ... The Holy Spirit won't let us do this. We cannot freeze the Church at the first century or any other century, however much it may appeal to us. A Church may pride itself on being 'Reformed', but if it is really building itself on the pattern of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it will be an unattractive anachronism. It is foolish to make no allowance, when building a doctrine of the ministry, for post-testamental developments."

He stresses the importance of this, for example, in the area of the ministry of women, believing that Paul's teaching concerning the role of women was not mandatory, but was cultural and thus is no longer applicable in its prohibition of women from leadership and vocal ministry. He comments further that if one 'freezes' the Church in the New Testament, one will have to deny much richness of life. This will not only be to the detriment of the Church but also to the derogation of the Holy Spirit. He believes that it is those who lay most claim to being a 'New Testament Church' who are in considerable danger of confusing what they claim to be biblical norms with ecclesiastical tradition on the one hand, and middle-class culture on the other. The hermeneutical task is an urgent one, consisting of the sifting of what is of permanent and enduring value from a mass of accretions which are of only secondary importance. The Bible, therefore, in Harper's opinion does not provide a blueprint. On the

one hand, one is not bound to reproduce everything that is contained in the New Testament, and on the other, the New Testament does not always have very much to say about particular issues, such as trans-local leadership, which had not developed at the time of the New Testament church. This position is representative of the denominational Charismatic Movement and the Fullness circle of house churches. Although many groups are eager to follow New Testament archetypes as closely as possible, there is no desire for a rigid conformity, but an openness to new patterns and means of expression, provided these do not contradict biblical principles. The Charismatic Movement has recognised that the fact that something is not referred to in the Bible is insufficient in itself to make it unbiblical. This distinction between the unbiblical and the extra-biblical is a delicate one, and it invites the unwary to tread on dangerous ground. Nevertheless, in an age where the Church has often failed to relate to the people it is trying to reach, the Charismatic Movement has pioneered effective means of communication and expression in worship and evangelism which are certainly extra-biblical but not necessarily unbiblical. Both this distinction and the movement's approach to the question of New Testament blueprints result in an attitude of openness and awareness which is quick to harness means and methods, and has communicated effectively with vast numbers of unchurched people.

Although initially slow to acknowledge the value of scholarly study, charismatics gradually developed a desire to deepen their understanding of the Bible. Catholics in particular often found that this was a new departure:

"... the Scriptures are studied anew, and in fact 'opened' to some who have not hitherto studied them with any consistency. The aim is not precisely exegetic (a study of literal meaning), but the revelation of spiritual content and its relevance to ourselves. A knowledge of exegesis however is valuable; among other advantages it prevents the making of highly personal interpretations of phrases or sentences, out of context with the author's meaning."<sup>32</sup>

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32. David Parry: Not Mad, Most Noble Festus. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1979. p.94.

David Parry has perceptively noted here the value of objective study in guarding against a purely subjective approach to Scripture. Cardinal Suenens describes the nature of such study of Scripture:

"This Renewal contributes something to advancement in exegesis not by providing new answers, but by asking new questions. We are invited to examine the text more closely in function of our daily lives. The grace of the Renewal is, in this respect, the grace of a deeper reading of Scripture, a deeper grasp of its reality; it is prayerfully meditated on and shared, but always with reference to concrete situations." <sup>33</sup>

A symposium was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in December 1978 with the purpose of examining the theological and pastoral issues regarding the use of Scripture in the Renewal, and the proceedings from this symposium have been published in the book Scripture and the Charismatic Renewal <sup>34</sup>. The symposium adhered to the usual understanding of the Renewal as a stage in a progressive cycle and placed the new emphasis upon Scripture within the context of developments in this area. It makes particular reference to the new lectionary readings introduced by the liturgical renewal that stemmed from Vatican II, and also referred to Pius XII's 1943 encyclical Divino Afflante Spiritu, which provided the impetus for the development of mature Catholic Scripture scholarship. Matters which were discussed included the relationship between the Bible and the Church, the inspiration and origins of the New Testament, the use of the Scripture in prayer, and the hermeneutics and teaching of Scripture. It is maintained that the relationship between the Bible and the Church is a complex one, and that it is an over-simplification to hold either that the Church is prior to the Bible or that the Bible is prior to the Church. Avery Dulles states that:

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33. op.cit.2. p.98.

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34. George Martin (Ed.): Scripture and the Charismatic Renewal. Servant Books. 1979.

"Although the ecclesial setting provides the normal and optimum situation for the reading of scripture, we must be on guard against domesticating the word of God or subjecting it to any kind of ecclesial monopoly."<sup>35</sup>

Concerning the relationship between Scripture and tradition, Dulles comments:

"Christian tradition may be defined as the process of handing down the apostolic faith. In a certain sense, tradition was prior to scripture, which is a written sedimentation of it. Since the Bible was written, tradition continues to exist as the vital atmosphere in which the Bible is preached, read and lived. Scripture does not exist alone, unaccompanied by tradition ...

"No Christian today can get at the scripture in its naked purity, unfiltered through tradition. As Paul Tillich saw very clearly, the only alternative to good tradition is bad tradition, the only alternative to a consciously held tradition is one unconsciously held. The biblicist sects are not without tradition. They have very definite traditions of exegesis, dogma, and ecclesiastical style. Thus in one sense the Bible alone cannot be the final criterion. The Bible does not exist alone for any Christian today."<sup>36</sup>

The article from which the above quotations are taken is commendable for its realization of the complexities of the issue under consideration, and for its clear presentation of the thought and argumentation surrounding the differences between the Protestant and Catholic approaches. Protestants have been too quick to claim that they are free from any influences of tradition and Dulles provides a timely reminder of this. The book as a

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35. Avery Dulles: op.cit.34. p.6.

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36. op.cit.35. p.13.

whole achieves a balance between devotional aspects and more academic considerations. Discussing the use of the Scripture in prayer, Paul Hinnebusch explains:

"... we come to an understanding of the scriptures only because, somehow, we are experiencing in our hearts what the scriptures are talking about. We come to an understanding of what God is doing in our hearts because we begin to realize that the scriptures are speaking of the very thing he is doing in us. This new realization is an encouraging confirmation of what God is doing. It enables us to respond more fully to our wordless experience, of which, perhaps, we were hardly aware. It brings the joy of knowing we are on the right track and that God is with us. It invites a new, deeper, and more conscious response to his presence and action. In the new response, the reality is deepened within us. This new response is truly prayer, for it brings us into deeper communion with God."<sup>37</sup>

This passage attempts to describe the spiritual discovery of the charismatic in communion with God, and it captures the thrill of the individual who finds the Bible 'coming alive' to him.

George Montague proposes a paradigm for study of the Bible which would include the following: awareness of one's own world, experience and interest; a simple reading of the text itself; a literary analysis of the text to see what is happening there; amplification of the literary study by historical-, form-, and redaction criticism, the occasion, and the author's intention and view as indicated from data outside the immediate text; study of the history of the function of the text; understanding through the fusion of these elements; judgment of the bearing of the text upon one's own world and experience; decision, involving conversion or deepening; dialectic, consisting of sharing and interaction with others; celebration and expression of what has been ascertained; and 'doing'.<sup>38</sup>

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37. Paul Hinnebusch: op.cit.34. p.65.

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38. George Montague: op.cit.34. pp.90-94.

This is certainly thorough, and the careful fusion here of the theoretical and the practical reflects a concern which is constantly expressed by Catholic charismatics. In his summary and conclusion, James O'Brien recognises the tremendous power of Scripture and states that the Catholic Church faces a great hunger for Scripture and needs to provide biblical teaching which both informs and inspires<sup>39</sup>. He then includes a section concerned with the directive use of Scripture, and discusses whether the Bible is meant to provide specific answers to current or personal questions and situations:

"... there can be no doubt that people are experiencing guidance through prayerful reflection upon the word. What is most laudable in this devotional practice of asking the Lord for a passage is the desire to be judged by the word of God and the desire to seek the Lord for an answer to a particular question or situation in one's life."

However, the damage which may be caused by misuse of the biblical text and lack of discernment may sometimes be irreparable<sup>40</sup>, and O'Brien stresses the importance of recognising the "hermeneutical gap", that is, the gap between what the text meant when the author was writing and what the text means today. He believes it is a distortion of Scripture to make it a collection of answers to all life's possible situations, and concludes:

"Lurking behind this 'black and white' approach to the scriptures

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39. James O'Brien: op.cit.34. p.101.

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40. The dangers inherent in 'asking the Lord for a passage' as specific guidance in a particular situation are recognised by many charismatics, both Catholic and Protestant. For example, whilst allowing that some people may have the gift of 'opening the Bible for a word' on some occasions, Alan Guile offered specific caution against this practice. Taped report on the National Pastoral Congress, Leaders' Conference, Hopwood Hall, 1980.

is, of course, the belief in sola scriptura and a literalist reading of individual texts. This approach is always inadequate.

"The terms 'Bible cracking' or 'Bible roulette' can refer to a simplistic seeking of God's word. At worst, this may degenerate into a magical approach to the scriptures ... The Lord is not accessible in this fashion. He reveals himself in faith over a period of time. Discernment involves a process of continual seeking and its accompanying confirmations.

"There is often a specialized language which sometimes goes along with the directive use of scripture. Such jargon is usually ambiguous. 'Standing on the word', 'standing under the word', 'the Lord says' are examples of such terminology. Some people have indeed been victimized by jargon. When these experiences are used as a reminder of the promises of Jesus and the depth of the word they are laudable. However, when they absolutize the Word of God apart from the context of the living tradition of the Church, they tend to reinforce fundamentalism."

He has touched on some important points here, which many Protestants would agree with. However, the intrusion of the authority of tradition is alien to the Protestant mind, and Protestant charismatics tend to be hesitant about giving unqualified approval to scholarly methods. Nevertheless, this book provides an example of the involvement of Catholic charismatics in the scholarly study of the Bible.

The Protestant charismatics have tended to place more emphasis upon the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing about understanding of Scripture. One finds frequent emphasis of the Holy Spirit's role as the believer's guide in the understanding and interpretation of the Bible, and Theological Renewal published an article by I. Howard Marshall concerning this<sup>41</sup>. He comments that whilst standard evangelical textbooks refer to the importance

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41. I. Howard Marshall: "The Holy Spirit and the Interpretation of Scripture". Theological Renewal. No.11. Feb.1979. pp.2-8.

of the Spirit's role in the interpretation of Scripture, and make the familiar point that apart from the Spirit's illumination the mind is blind to spiritual truth and unable to believe God's message, little is said about the matter apart from this. Marshall makes several points in order to remedy this deficiency. Firstly, the Spirit acts in terms of God's 'common grace' to enable men in general to have some understanding of the teaching of the Scriptures. Secondly, the work of the Spirit in enabling believers to understand the Scriptures is part of His general task of equipping them for God's service, and Marshall makes the important point that the 'psychology' of His action lies beyond human understanding. He then draws the readers' attention to the following distinction: the Spirit acts in believers in a general way when they use their minds for any other purpose, but He operates especially in enabling the application of the message of Scripture to lives today. This involves the re-application of the Word which was originally given to a particular group of recipients to present situations. Then fifthly, the Spirit provides the key to the interpretation of Scripture, just as He gave the early Church the insight that Jesus Christ is the key to the Old Testament. He enables one to see and appreciate the Bible's theological message, instead of seeing it simply as a literary work or a history book. Marshall also broadens the concept of the gift of interpretation, stating that it is a gift to and for the Church:

"The individual interpreter needs the insights which the Spirit has given to other Christians in order to interpret the Scriptures rightly."

He goes on to stress that the Spirit and the Word belong together, and that relying solely on the Spirit and failing to compare Scripture with Scripture leads to subjectivism and error in interpretation. And finally, the message of Scripture cannot be understood and applied without the aid of the Spirit. The perceptiveness and common sense of these comments show that the Charismatic Movement has drawn on balanced and wise teaching here.

The most controversial issue in the Charismatic Movement concerning Scripture is undoubtedly that involving the status of prophecy in relation to the Bible. The fact that prophecy has reputedly been accorded the same



status as Scripture or even been allowed to supercede Scripture has been a cause of considerable concern to many observers. Participants too have expressed grave disquiet over this issue and it is inaccurate to assert, as some do, that the entire Charismatic Movement is either oblivious to it, or else has purposefully raised prophecy to the status of the Bible. It is true to say that some participants in the Charismatic Movement do not feel that the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture are strategically important issues, and this is basically because their time is taken up with what they believe are more central matters. These tend to take the form of more experience-orientated concerns: personal experience of the Holy Spirit, the 'living out' of one's Christian commitment, and experiential unity in the ecumenical field. Particularly in the latter area, there is great personally-imposed pressure to push doctrinal and theological differences into the background so as not to impair unity. Such things must necessarily be held as secondary lest they hinder unity, and it is at this point that statements concerning Scripture begin to lose their clarity. It is then only a simple step to the point at which new revelation is permitted and prophecy is accorded the same status as Scripture. Although this is generally more by accident than by design, some groups are fully aware of the fact that they are allowing divine utterances through prophecy or visions to approach the level of Scripture. These are usually those which emphasise that God is constantly doing a new thing and who are so eager to remain open to whatever this new thing may be that they blur some of the formerly well-defined boundaries. Words are often carefully chosen in defining the status of the Bible so as to accord it authority whilst at the same time allowing for further developments. A characteristic position of some house churches is to state at the outset that God's moral character and will are revealed in the Bible, but that the *ρημα* as well as the *λογος* is the revelation of God. This opens up the possibility that the Bible is not the complete Word of God. Because of the operation of prophecy in particular and the identification of this with the *ρημα*, further revelation may come. This is invariably with the proviso that it will not contradict the moral character and will of God that the Bible bears witness to. Any spoken word (*ρημα*) today would therefore have to have this backing; one person stated that Mormonism and Christian Science, for example, are to be rejected because they are deficient in this respect. However:

"The whole idea that God revealed it all in the Bible and doesn't speak anymore is completely erroneous."

When asked whether the Bible is a complete or only a partial revelation, the same person<sup>42</sup> was hesitant about drawing a clear distinction:

"For example, after Revelation there is a complete unknown. So it is not total in this sense. Yet much of the character and nature of God is revealed in it."

The Bible is thus portrayed as a total revelation in some areas, but only a partial revelation in others. There is frequently a reluctance to be pinned down on the matter, and a preference to remain vague about it. Michael Harper, however, does his best to clarify issues, and with regard to this particular one, he seeks to distinguish between prophecy and Scripture:

"A prophecy given at a meeting does not have universal and eternal application as scripture has. But the main difference is that when there is a prophecy I must judge whether it really is God speaking or not. But when I read the scriptures I know that it is God's word."<sup>43</sup>

Whereas Scripture is therefore to be accepted confidently as God's word, prophecy is to be considered and judged. However, more may be drawn out of this statement than immediately meets the eye. One would have thought that the main difference would be that which is stated in the first sentence, and the fact that Harper points rather to the necessity of judging the origin of prophecy suggests that, provided it be from God, it may approach the level of Scripture. His second sentence thus blurs the clarity of the

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42. Interview with the leader of a group involved with the Fullness circle. July, 1980.

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43. Michael Harper: Walk In The Spirit. Hodder+Stoughton. 1968. p.77.

first. It seems probable from the rest of his writings that he would reaffirm the authority and uniqueness of Scripture. Nevertheless, this shows how much care is necessary over statements involving Scripture if there is not to be ambiguity or contradiction.

A characteristic feature of Renewal has been the carefully produced articles which seek to shed light on debated issues, and an article in one of the earliest issues of the magazine attempts to do just that with regard to the Bible, inspiration and revelation. Its author takes a clear stand on the uniqueness of Scripture:

"If any teaching contradicts it (Scripture), it is wrong and to be rejected' ... No Scripture is, nor can be, written today ... The Bible, as God's Word, stands above 'the Church', and also above my reasons and my feelings, and both must submit to its scrutiny ... The Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures, and He will not contradict Himself ... to suppose that one is speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit, when going against the Scriptures, is again simply a delusion ..."

Having stated his position clearly in this way, he goes on to make a helpful and sensible distinction between revelation in the Bible, and the inspiration and guidance of individual believers by the Spirit:

"Some people imagine that, because the canon of Scripture is complete, therefore no immediate revelations by the Holy Spirit are either needed or permitted today in the Church. If they mean revelation of the way of salvation and the principles of the Christian life, we must agree with them. But the New Testament is quite clear that these gifts of inspiration and revelation are meant to continue until the end of the age (1 Cor.ch.13.vv.8-12)."

The inspiration and revelation that is available today comes in the form of the charismatic gifts of the word of knowledge, the word of wisdom, and the discerning of spirits. The word of knowledge frequently occurs in the context of counselling, and consists of the revelation of the knowledge of

facts hidden from the counsellor. The word of wisdom usually takes the form of a clear indication of what to do in circumstances which do not themselves give any guidance. And the discerning of spirits is understood by this writer as enabling one to identify the exact nature of Satan's hold over a person, although in recent years it has more usually been understood in the wider sense of indicating whether the source of a person's inspiration is divine, human, or satanic.

In his comments concerning prophecy, the writer adds:

"Some people object to prophecy before they even hear it, because they say we need only Scripture. And then when they do hear it they complain because it is so like Scripture! That, to me, is a mark of its genuineness ... " <sup>44</sup>

His stand upon the uniqueness of the biblical revelation is uncompromising and clear, and this contrasts with a Renewal Study Section written by Tom Smail over ten years later which concerns itself with a similar topic, namely the relationship between Word and Spirit<sup>45</sup>. Smail describes Word and Spirit as the principal agents used by God to communicate Himself, His gospel and His salvation to His people and to the world. The Word contains and expresses God's truth, life and power, and it is by the Spirit that that Word is both given and received. Word and Spirit therefore always belong closely together and one cannot understand or profit by the ministry of one without at the same time being open to the ministry of the other. Smail points to the parallel between Eph.ch.5.v.18 ('Be filled with the Spirit') and Col.ch.3.v.16 ('Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly'), stating that this is of great significance and brings out two different aspects of what is essentially the same thing:

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44. J.P. Baker: "The Spirit of God and the Word of God", Renewal. No.5. Oct/Nov 1966. pp.16-20

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45. Tom Smail: Renewal Study Section ("Word and Spirit"). Renewal. No.66. Dec/Jan 1977.

"The man who is full of the Spirit will be deep in the Word, and the man who is deep in the Word will be open to all the promises and operations of the Spirit."

Smail then goes on to define three forms of the Word, on the basis that it is used in Scripture and in Christian teaching in three different senses. Firstly, the personal Word of God is the Lord Jesus Christ, whilst secondly, the written Word of God is to be found in the form of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The New Testament Scriptures are apostolic in that they contain the original testimony to Jesus by the apostolic company who alone bore first-hand witness to His life, death and resurrection and were inspired by the Spirit to give the classic and irreplaceable exposition of His gospel. Because they are apostolic, the New Testament Scriptures are also normative for all generations and confessions of Christians, and Christ is not to be known first in speculations or traditions, but only in these Scriptures. Smail emphasises that the New Testament therefore has a unique and central place in the faith and life of God's people, and that theology, liturgy, government, lifestyle and ethics must all be submitted to it and brought under its judgment and correction. It is through the written word along with the sacraments it authorizes that one receives and renews one's relationship with Christ, the personal Word. Smail goes on to list the third form of the Word of God as "the proclaimed Word" and he defines this by pointing to the biblical usage of the phrase that refers not to the written word of a book but to the spoken Word of prophet, apostle, preacher or teacher. Acts ch.4.v.31, ch.6.v.7, and ch.8.v.25 provide but three examples of this usage. These three forms of the Word of God stand in a definite set of relationships to one another: Christ is properly and essentially the Word of God, His self-communication with mankind; Scripture is the Word of God in its pointing to Christ and its deriving of authority from Him; and "preaching and prophecy" are the Word of God in so far as they are faithful to Scripture and point to Christ.

The implications of this teaching are far-reaching. By bringing in the proclaimed Word here and placing it alongside both Christ and the Scripture, Smail is, in effect, providing an opening for prophecy, preaching, and individual claims to revelation to approach the level of

Scripture. If presented with the categories 'Word' and 'Spirit', it is more usual to place prophecy and teaching within the latter and to state that the 'Word' was brought to completion by the closure of the New Testament canon. However, Smail argues systematically for the place of the Proclaimed Word as the third form of the Word of God:

"But God did not stop speaking when Scripture was complete. He still speaks when his servants proclaim a word that is faithful to Christ and His gospel in preaching, testimony and teaching, and he also speaks in the various word gifts of the Holy Spirit - especially prophecy (1 Cor.ch.14.vv.24-25) ... When scripture is rightly expounded and when authentic prophecy is delivered, we are hearing the Word of God."

Despite the apparent safeguard of bringing this 'third form' under the judgment of Scripture, it is clear that many conservative theologians would still find this treatment highly unacceptable, and would regard it as tantamount to the superceding of Scripture along with its inevitable implication that the Bible does not provide the complete revelation of God. Smail states that:

"God has joined together his Word and his Spirit, the evangelical message and the charismatic gift, and man is not to put them asunder."

He suggests that readers consider, amongst other things, how the authentic Word of God can be recognised in preaching and prophecy and what should be expected to happen when the Word is proclaimed in the power of the Spirit. Whilst accepting that preaching may be inspired, guided and used by the Spirit in one sense, many Christians would halt very firmly at this point and disagree that the definition 'Word of God' can be applied to preaching in so concrete and direct a way. The distinctions in this sphere are inevitably very delicate ones, but Smail has stepped across the dividing line, and the fact that such a well-known and respected leader in the movement has taken this position must surely have influenced the position of many others. It also provides an example of the significance of the implications of a doctrine, even if these are not clearly spelled out by

the authors themselves. Much of what some have regarded as error in the Charismatic Movement is not primarily the result of what somebody has actually stated, but rather of something that is implicit in their position and which they have often failed to recognise.

In a movement whose tenets depend upon particular interpretations of Scripture, the principles of Bible exegesis employed are all important. Although it has progressed from the fundamentalist approach to the Bible which was characteristic of its earlier days, the Charismatic Movement often seems blissfully unaware of the complexities of Bible exegesis. It is not uncommon to find portions of Scripture quoted in support of some aspect of teaching with total disregard for their actual context within Scripture. The problems involved in interpreting the current relevance of a given passage have only recently begun to be recognised, and Michael Harper is one of the few to have tackled this, notably in Let My People Grow. However, when so much in the Charismatic Movement centres upon the content of historical passages, the basic question of how to interpret what these passages say has received too little attention.

The move away from fundamentalism has been welcomed by members of most theological persuasions, and has been endorsed by leaders of the Charismatic Movement for differing reasons. Some feel that a less simplistic approach which opens itself to scholarly study will result in a more competent theological grounding for the Charismatic Movement and can only strengthen it. Others feel that a less strict stance concerning Scripture will widen the scope of the Movement in the ecumenical field and will also avoid excessive dogmatism which could restrict the movement of the Holy Spirit. These people may well eventually encourage not only a move away from fundamentalism, but a progression from conservatism towards a more liberal view of the Bible. The Catholic charismatics occupy the middle ground here. There is a clear anti-fundamentalist stance amongst the leaders of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Francis Sullivan, for example, describes fundamentalism as a "lurking danger" in the Renewal, partly because of its association with Classical Pentecostalism, but also because of the fundamentalist approach to Scripture which he detects in those who have not had the opportunity to "study scripture in a scientific way". He expresses particular concern about the view that if a charism

(charismatic gift) is not explicitly mentioned in the Bible, then it cannot be a charism. The new problems and needs of each age require new gifts, and the idea that everything that happened in the New Testament Church has to happen now is too literalistic and is wrong. He stresses that there were cultural things in the New Testament church which are not to be applied in the same literal way for ever, and that it is consequently necessary first to seek the meaning of the text and then to adapt it to the contemporary situation<sup>46</sup>. The Milwaukee Symposium responsible for the statement on Scripture and the Charismatic Renewal notes the problem posed by fundamentalism and the pastoral consequences which emerge from a literal reading of the Scriptures<sup>47</sup>. And the Malines Document includes a cautionary section on "biblical fundamentalism<sup>48</sup>", warning:

"When Scripture is used in a more public way by persons without specific exegetical training, a literalness of interpretation may become evident, with the danger of biblical fundamentalism ... because it (the Catholic Charismatic Renewal) is characterised by lay categories, it also has a lay approach to the Sacred Scriptures. This means that it tends to approach the text directly and to allow the text to speak without the aid of a formulated hermeneutic."

This Document realises that the general Catholic population is basically fundamentalist in its approach to Scripture, and states in a matter-of-fact way:

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46. Francis Sullivan: taped talk on "Catholic Charismatic Renewal", Hawkstone Hall (undated).

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47. op.cit.34. p.116.

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48. Cardinal Suenens: Theological and Pastoral Orientations on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Word of Life. 1974. pp.39-41.



"If fundamentalism is more of a problem within the renewal, it is in large part due to the daily reading of the Bible, a practice repeatedly encouraged by the popes. The fundamentalism in the general population is not visible because there are so few occasions when they read the Bible."

It further notes that an interpretation of a biblical event as historical is not necessarily fundamentalistic at all. The healings performed by Jesus, for instance, have often been understood as symbols rather than historical events, and a literalistic understanding of such passages is not a fundamentalistic one. Professional exegesis will be at its best when based on faith experience as well as scientific skills. The above may be seen by conservative Protestants as an encouraging sign of increasing biblicism in the Catholic Renewal. Whilst keen to remain free from fundamentalism, Catholic charismatics have certainly developed a more conservative approach to the Bible.

When one considers that the Charismatic Movement has usually brought to its participants a fresh respect for the Bible, and, for many, a new acknowledgement of its authority and infallibility, it is paradoxical that the most hostile criticism of the Charismatic Movement has come from Evangelicalism. Richard Quebedeaux offers the following analysis of why this is so:

"... the churches from which (classical) Pentecostalism originally emerged, as well as those that have been most bitter in their opposition to the Pentecostal experience, have frequently been those that emphasize what they feel to be the biblical foundation of their doctrine and practice. Thus, when Pentecostals claim their own practice as the biblical pattern, it is an obvious challenge to the former (commonly fundamentalist) groups and churches." <sup>49</sup> (his italics)

Criticism has centred mainly around the issue of whether or not there are

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49. Richard Quebedeaux: The New Charismatics. Doubleday. 1976.

authentic New Testament charismatic gifts for today's church, and around that of the status of the Bible in relation to the question of prophecy and revelation. A recent publication has criticised the Charismatic Movement for its attitude to the Bible, and in particular for failing to recognise the Bible as the primary authority for the Christian:

"... in the Charismatic ranks no experience has to stand the test of Scripture. The Charismatics, by the nature of their theological persuasion, have no way to judge or stop bizarre testimonies of experience because the experience validates itself. Instead of checking someone's experience against the Bible for validity, the Charismatic tries to get the Bible to fit the experience or, failing that, he just ignores the Bible ...

"... a subtle but terrible thing is developing. Instead of being a response to the revelation in the Word of God, Christianity is becoming a collection of fantastic experiences. The Bible is twisted around to fit the experience or just ignored altogether. The result is sub-Christian mysticism." <sup>50</sup> (his italics)

This book is not a totally unsympathetic treatment of the Charismatic Movement, but although these comments may serve as a warning for some extreme groups, they are inaccurate for a large proportion of the movement. In the main denominational groupings there is firm adherence to the primacy of the Bible's testimony over any experience, and considerable caution is exercised with regard to experience, inspiration and guidance. The leaders in particular are very much aware of the dangers of subjectivistic interpretation, and such criticisms as those of MacArthur recorded above are very unfair to the movement. The numerous Evangelicals who openly embrace the movement or maintain a sympathetic attitude towards it whilst keenly aware of its failings, provide the counterbalance to such criticism. In connection with this, it is interesting to note the comment of the Catholic George Every who notes that Catholics now have:

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50. John F. MacArthur: The Charismatics: A Doctrinal Perspective. Zondervan. 1978. pp.58-9, 61-2.

"... more in common with conservative Evangelicals emerging from fundamentalism, who have never completely lost interest in the spiritual interpretation of Scripture, than with academic theologians for whom theology has become a specialised branch of historical study, concerned with the Bible and the primitive Church." 51

If he is correct, then this unlikely convergence has come about partly through the influence of the Charismatic Movement.

In conclusion, it may be said that the Bible is very important to participants in the Charismatic Movement, but that in common with the Church as a whole, interpretations are debated by those within the movement. It is not always a simple matter to distinguish what is truly of the Holy Spirit from something that is solely a product of the human mind and the preconceptions and biases which tend to be a part of the latter. The charismatic may well be more open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the interpretation of the Bible than the hard-line biblicist, but this also involves the possibility of a wider degree of human error. The biblicist's possible degree of error is somewhat narrower, simply because it is confined by the contents of the Bible. This control may not operate for the charismatic if he believes either that the Bible has little to say about a particular topic or circumstance, or that what it does have to say no longer applies. The characteristic Fullness plea voiced by Maurice Smith must express the feelings of many who are not involved with the Fullness circle, or indeed with the Charismatic Movement:

"Our thinking is so often like a rigid old wineskin. It is incapable of expansion and resistant to movement. We want to contain everything in a strait-jacket of rightness ...

"Instead of being completely sure of his general principles and giving God room to play a new variation on an old theme, we've tried to make him play our favourite melody over and over. He

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51. George Every: op.cit.19. p.199.

wants to go on being his creative self in situation after situation." 52

The eagerness with which the Charismatic Movement has explored new methods of expression - in worship and evangelism, to give but two examples - shows an openness to creativity and development. Many of these developments are expressions of modern culture and were unenvisaged in the New Testament era. There has been some opposition to them on the grounds that they are unbiblical, but the assumption that something which is extra-biblical is necessarily unbiblical should be challenged. Participants in the movement have often been impatient with such critics and have tended to respond not by patient reasoning, but by an attitude of 'It doesn't matter anyway'. This has been an unhelpful response, which has hindered the resolution of misunderstandings and has appeared to verify claims that the movement shows a lack of concern about being biblical. It is undoubtedly true that the general feeling of the Charismatic Movement is that it would rather risk making mistakes than be stationary in its nature and expression. Perhaps the Christian Church has been too afraid of making mistakes and has lost some of its dynamism as a result. Lack of dynamism is a factor of which the Charismatic Movement has certainly been free, and there has been considerable emphasis by leaders such as Michael Harper upon the need to contain this within the framework of biblical principles.

These biblical principles have often been hotly debated, for it is possible to provide opposing interpretations of many things, and argue all of them forcibly from Scripture. It is also possible to find justification in the Bible for beliefs which have developed through experience and which would not necessarily have come about if the Bible had been the starting point. This has a lot of bearing upon the issue of baptism in the Holy Spirit, as will be evident later. This swing from objectivity towards subjectivity and individualism is characteristic of the Charismatic Movement, is present in many aspects of its teaching, and underlies most of what the movement stresses. Whilst many observers would accept that the desire to redress the balance towards subjectivity is a legitimate one,

there are grounds for questioning whether there has been sufficient safeguarding against the inherent dangers involved in this, and particularly so with experience-based interpretation of the Bible.

## Chapter 5.

### BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT

The experience of baptism in the Spirit has been at the core of charismatic renewal, and it is extremely important to participants in the Charismatic Movement. It is presented as an experience of infilling and empowering by the Holy Spirit which transforms a Christian's life, an occurrence for which a New Testament precedent is claimed in several texts, notably Acts ch.8.vv.15-17 and ch.10.vv.44-46. As well as being an inner working of the Holy Spirit, baptism in the Spirit is an outward manifestation into the realm of that which can be seen and heard. It is often accompanied by physical manifestations such as great heat, the feeling of a current of power passing through the body, intense joy, love for God and people, sometimes the healing of a physical ailment, and frequently speaking in tongues. Invariably, there is a vivid awareness of the immediate presence of God, and some people feel this so intensely that they think the Second Coming of Jesus must be taking place.

Baptism in the Spirit often comes about after the laying on of hands by other Christians or through private, personal prayer, but sometimes it just comes upon a Christian and takes them by surprise. The American Lutheran Larry Christenson has listed five features that broadly characterise the experience<sup>1</sup>. Firstly, baptism in the Spirit usually occurs in the context of either private or corporate prayer, generally after consciously asking for the blessing. Secondly, the seeking is not with a view to becoming a Christian, but with the purpose of receiving power to live the Christian life more effectively and fruitfully. Christenson assumes on the basis of Rom.ch.8.v.9 that one already has the Spirit and that one is seeking a fullness or release of the Holy Spirit in one's life, as opposed to an initial reception. He emphasises that the focus is trinitarian, expressing a desire to live under the Lordship of Christ, to the glory of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. Then thirdly,

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1. Larry Christenson: "Baptism with the Holy Spirit: a Lutheran perspective". Theological Renewal No.4. Oct/Nov. 1976. p.22.

the expectation is for a fresh release or bestowal of the Holy Spirit which will be marked and manifest and may have the impact of initiation into a consciously Spirit-filled, Spirit-led life. A sense of deep and long-range commitment is also involved, and Christenson would distinguish this from daily prayers for the help or guidance of the Spirit. Fourthly, Christenson states that those who pray for the filling of the Spirit in the context of charismatic renewal usually speak in tongues. This may be either immediate or after a sometimes considerable time lapse, and it is possible that another gift such as healing or prophecy may accompany the initial experience, although this is less common. Finally, the baptism leads to a vitalization of personal faith. This may find expression in a variety of ways, but many find that it marks a turning point in their Christian life, in effect a new beginning. It is obvious that baptism in the Spirit is understood as a Christian experience of deep significance, and the results of the baptism bear witness to this. They are generally agreed upon by charismatics and consist of a heightened awareness of God's presence and leading, greater freedom and enthusiasm in worship, increased eagerness to read the Bible and pray, an appreciation of other believers and love towards them, greater moral sensitivity, and a deeper Christian commitment. It also commonly initiates a search for a more serious and meaningful Christianity: most people look back to their baptism in the Spirit as an experience which initiated their present desire for God and the seriousness with which they take their Christian living. In 1975, Tom Small described the results of his personal experience of the phenomenon:

"I write as one for whom just such an experience can be seen, in the perspective of almost ten years, to have been a quite critical turning point. It was a datable event which moved a man and a ministry from a position of relatively fruitless effortfulness and existential distance from God, into releasing discovery of the limitless life and power that God sought to make available to me, of the largely unappropriated reality of praise and prayer, of a new sense of being personally addressed by the word of God in scripture, a new pastoral empathy with people, and a new ability to diagnose and deal with their needs, a new confidence and reality in preaching and worship, and a new sense of victory at some outstanding points of defeat in the moral

struggle - all leading to a new confidence of hope in what God was going to do in my own life and in the life of his Church." <sup>2</sup>

Catholic charismatics testify to a new appreciation and love of the Catholic church and a desire to be involved in it, a new realization of the meaning of the Mass and an eagerness to attend, and increased devotion to Mary. Protestant charismatics also normally express a renewed allegiance to their respective denominations and a keenness to become more fully involved in them. David Parry has noted in particular the benefits of the baptism in the Spirit for the priest. As well as helping him with the professional aspects of his life, the experience brings new strength to deal with trial and temptation and helps him to cope with chastity, prayer and loneliness<sup>3</sup>. Other people mention the growth of the 'fruit of the Spirit' of Gal.ch.5.v.22, a new effectiveness in personal evangelism, and authority over satanic powers.

Although such important and far-reaching benefits are claimed for the baptism in the Spirit experience, participants in the Charismatic Movement still find it necessary to engage in apologetics in order to convince their critics of the necessity of making an unbiased appraisal of the phenomenon. Michael Harper<sup>4</sup> sets out four principles which should be adhered to if an inquiry into the baptism in the Spirit is to be a fair one. The most vital of these is that the search must be based on the Bible rather than the traditions of the Church or the experiences of men. Charismatics are usually very much aware that Church history and traditional Christian experience weigh heavily against their case, and their worry is that Christians will consequently fail to approach the whole subject with an

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2. Tom Smail: Reflected Glory. Hodder and Stoughton. 1975. pp.17-18.

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3. David Parry: Not Mad, Most Noble Festus. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1979. pp.32-34.

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4. Michael Harper: Power For The Body Of Christ. Fountain Trust. 1964. pp.13-15, 18-22, 43-44.



open mind. Harper is acutely conscious of this:

"Our traditions and experiences should be moulded by Scripture. We should not allow our experience (or our lack of experience) to judge the Scriptures. We should be careful too to see that our interpretation of Scripture is taught us by the Holy Spirit and not the opinions of men. We must beware of 'traditional' interpretations'." (his italics)

Harper states that the whole of the Bible must be examined for this divine promise of the infilling of the Holy Spirit. As a counter to the common claim that the Acts of the Apostles was written for historical and not doctrinal purposes, Harper asserts that the practice of the apostles is vital to an understanding of their doctrine, for apostolic practice cannot contradict apostolic doctrine. Harper's second principle is that the promised blessing should be easy to understand, this being based on the fact that the promise is given to all Christians regardless of their spiritual maturity. In the early church, it was not a complicated doctrine, but something which could be understood and appropriated by the youngest and most immature convert. The third and fourth principles are concerned with motives. The Christian seeking this promise should be concerned only with the glory of God in all things, and the search must be seriously undertaken, for God will not "deal deeply with triflers". Harper finds the promise of the Spirit throughout the Bible, and he describes this as follows:

"We shall see the root of it in the prophets of the Old Testament, the stem or trunk in the Gospels, and the flower or fruits in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles."

In the Old Testament, the promise of the Holy Spirit is linked with the promise of forgiveness and cleansing, and John the Baptist, as the last of the prophets, links these two blessings together, announcing that the source of them both is in Jesus the Son of God. Jesus is therefore the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit. Harper refutes the argument that Christians should not seek this blessing since there is no commandment to do so in the Epistles. The apostle Paul assumed that every true Christian

had been baptized in water (Rom.ch.6.v.3) and that Christians took part in the Lord's Supper (1 Cor.ch.11.v.17f.), yet nowhere does he command them to do so. This, says Harper, is because it automatically happened. Likewise, there are no commands to seek the baptism in the Spirit, for in those days it was part of normal Christian initiation and the writers of the epistles would have assumed that everyone had received the power of the Holy Spirit.

This approach is typical of the charismatic, who wishes to draw attention to the fact that the baptism in the Spirit is a scriptural phenomenon which is intended for Christians in every age. The biblical framework of the experience is normally carefully explained to the seeker, and this is followed by instruction concerning how one is to receive the promised baptism. Prior to seeking the baptism, Christians are advised to recognise and overcome certain hindrances to reception. A Renewal Study Section lists these as: absence of commitment and conversion (Acts ch.2.vv.38-39); sin in the believer, especially pride (Acts ch.8.vv.18-24); unbelief (Acts ch.10.vv.44-46); ignorance (Acts ch.19.vv.1-6); and fear (2 Tim.ch.1.vv.6-7)<sup>5</sup>. A number of conditions must then be fulfilled, and Michael Harper states that if - as he believes - the blessing is the same today as it was for the early Christians, then the conditions must be the same also. The first of these conditions is belief, for the person involved must be a committed Christian. Secondly, there must be repentance, because unconfessed sin or rebelliousness against God may hinder the reception of the baptism in the Spirit. This factor is stressed: confession, renunciation of all known sin, and restitution may all be necessary before reception of the baptism can be possible. A faith which trusts in Christ and will step out to receive what God has promised is another vital condition. Harper notes how often prayer is associated with baptism in the Spirit, and he comments with respect to this:

"We may need the spirit of wrestling Jacob, who would not let God go until He had blessed him."

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5. Renewal Study Section ("Promise of the Spirit"). Renewal No.55. Feb/March 1975.

However, the quantity or intensity of prayer will not of itself procure the baptism in the Spirit, for it is when God sees a heartfelt desire for the blessing that He will give it. Harper detects no scriptural techniques for the receiving of the baptism. He notes, for example, that although the laying on of hands is scriptural, it seems to have been exceptional in the early church and is definitely not a pre-requisite. The main ingredient in reception is rather "naked faith based on the promise of Christ". The help of others who have already been baptised in the Spirit may be beneficial, and the narrative of Acts makes it clear that God does sometimes use other people to minister in this matter<sup>6</sup>. In Walk in the Spirit, Harper presents the conditions pictorially, in terms of a thirsting (a search for the fullness of the Spirit) which reaches out to the correct source (Jesus, the Giver, or the Baptizer - and not the gift itself), responds by faith to God's promise of "our birthright", and 'drinks' as the means of appropriation. He concludes:

"We cannot dictate to God the exact moment of reception, and to pressurise Him, or to be pressurised by others, only indicates lack of faith, and may be dangerous. But if we believe in the promise, we know that a time will surely come when we shall receive, and know that we have received, the fullness of the Holy Spirit."<sup>7</sup>

The Life In The Spirit Seminars Team Manual pinpoints similar conditions which must be fulfilled before a person can be baptized in the Spirit. The fifth of the seven seminars has the express purpose of assisting people in their reception of the baptism, and the usual procedure involves commanding any evil spirits present to depart from people (i.e. exorcism), the laying of hands upon each individual, and specific prayer that they will be baptized in the Spirit, followed by counselling if necessary. All this ideally takes place in an atmosphere of worship, faith, peace, and relaxed

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6. op.cit.4. pp.38-41.

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7. Michael Harper: Walk In The Spirit. Hodder and Stoughton. 1968. pp.16-20.

joy<sup>8</sup>.

We move on now to the question of how a Christian knows that they have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Classical Pentecostalism has always pointed to speaking in tongues as the 'initial evidence', and many neo-Pentecostals hold this position. They believe that every person who has been baptized in the Spirit is able to speak in tongues and should expect to do so<sup>9</sup>. In some cases, it may be openly stated that something is missing in a person's spiritual life if they have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, but have not yet spoken in tongues. However, many participants in the Charismatic Movement find this emphasis upon tongues disturbing. Their feelings have been accurately summarised by Clark Pinnock, a non-participant who writes on behalf of evangelicals:

"Evangelicals are almost all disturbed by the suggestion that the necessary sign of the fullness of the Spirit in a person's life is glossolalia. Not only do they recognise such a view as a complete novelty in the history of Christian piety, they object to the inflated importance given to this particular gift and to the attempts, sometimes quite crude, to impose the practice on others. Most do not wish to deny that tongues belong quite properly to the New Testament spectrum of gifts of the Spirit, but only want to protest the exaggerated emphasis placed upon it." 10

Denial that tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism in the Spirit

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8. See Life In The Spirit Seminars Team Manual. Servant Books. 1973.

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9. This is clearly stated, for example, in the commitment class notes of the Bradford House Church.

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10. Clark H. Pinnock: "An Evangelical Theology of the Charismatic Renewal". Theological Renewal. No.7. Oct/Nov.1977. p.30.

does not constitute a rejection of glossolalia as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, but rather a rejection of what is frequently described as "the law of tongues". Most charismatics agree that there ought to be some experiential evidence in a Christian's life that he really does have the Holy Spirit dwelling within him. However, whilst this may possibly be the sign of tongues, the latter is neither necessary nor sufficient by itself as evidence of an intervention of the Holy Spirit. Francis Sullivan points to the transformation of men into bold witnesses for Christ (Acts ch.1.v.8) and the presence of the fruit of the Spirit, and indeed any event which constitutes a Christian's initial experience of the Holy Spirit's transforming power, as evidence for the baptism:

"If it is by the fruits that we are to discern the Spirit, it seems quite safe to judge from such fruits as these that the Holy Spirit is at work here in a new and more powerful way." <sup>11</sup>

A succinct summary of thought on the subject of the initial evidence of the baptism in the Spirit is found in the Joint Statement of Anglican Evangelical Council and Fountain Trust nominees. They agree that the New Testament shows the reception of the Spirit by Christians to be something experienced, evidenced and often immediately perceived, rather than merely inferred (Acts ch.19.v.2; Gal.ch.3.v.2). Although speaking in tongues is an initial phenomenon recorded several times in Acts, the group feels that the New Testament does not allow glossolalia to be made the only, the universal, or the indubitable evidence that the gift of the Spirit has been given. They recognise the danger of appearing to identify the Giver with the presence of any one of the gifts in isolation, whatever the value of that gift in itself. In the light of the New Testament, they conclude that evidence of the reception of the Holy Spirit is found in:

" ... a new awareness of the love, forgiveness and presence of God as our Father through Jesus Christ who is confessed as Lord,

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11. Francis A. Sullivan: "What is a Pentecostal experience? A reply to a question raised by Simon Tugwell". Theological Renewal No.6. June/July 1977. pp.21-25.

and the joyful spontaneous praise of God (whether in one's own tongue or another), issuing subsequently in a life of righteousness and obedience, and of loving service to God and man, a life which manifests gifts of the Spirit as well as spiritual understanding." <sup>12</sup>

Firm adherence to the doctrine that glossolalia is the necessary initial evidence of baptism in the Spirit has declined over the years, and this provides an example of the decreasing dogmatism which has characterised several areas of the Charismatic Movement's theology. Many people who once took a firm line on tongues as the initial evidence no longer do so, and this is clearly illustrated in the writings of Michael Harper. In As At The Beginning, he reviews relevant passages of Scripture to show that there is a definite case for linking baptism in the Spirit with glossolalia, and comments:

"It has been loyalty to the conviction which has in the main cost Pentecostals so much ridicule and condemnation. Now some theologians are coming to see that they have been right all along." <sup>13</sup>

But by 1968, a rather less dogmatic approach can be detected in Walk In The Spirit. Stating that some people insist that speaking in tongues is the invariable initial evidence that a person has received or been filled with the Holy Spirit, Harper says:

"But it is difficult to be dogmatic about this, for the only scriptural evidence we have at our disposal is a series of incidents in the Acts, and even this slender documentation is not conclusive."

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12. Joint Statement: Church of England Evangelical Council and Fountain Trust. Theological Renewal Occasional Paper No.1. April/May 1977. p. 5.

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13. Michael Harper: As At The Beginning. Hodder and Stoughton. 1965. pp.102-104.

Harper concludes that all that can be said is that it seems to have been the normal pattern in the New Testament<sup>14</sup>. Finally, in 1979 he describes his position as one that would:

" ... reject altogether that speaking in tongues is the only or necessary evidence of Spirit baptism, though it would accept that it often is." <sup>15</sup>

This displays a clear shift in thought away from a restrictive viewpoint to one which is more open to variation, and it is representative of a majority in the Charismatic Movement. Evidence of the baptism in the Spirit is increasingly sought in the areas of personal holiness, the fruit of the Spirit, and witness in words and life to the Lordship of Christ.

Terminology has been a problem where the initial charismatic experience is concerned. A variety of terms have been used to describe it, the most common of which is baptism in the Spirit (or baptism of the Spirit, or baptism with the Spirit). Numerous other names are used in the New Testament to refer to the reception of the Holy Spirit by the believer: the 'promise of the Father', 'the gift of the Holy Spirit', 'receiving the Spirit', 'being filled with the Spirit'. The action of the Holy Spirit in this is described in terms of 'coming upon', 'clothing', 'falling upon', and 'pouring out'. There is thus a variety of possible terminology, and different people believe different terms to be the most apt. Baptism in the Spirit is undoubtedly the most popular of these and continues to be the most widely used. However, it has been subjected to extensive criticism on a number of grounds. The term is found in the Bible only in its verbal form, notably with reference to the ministry of Jesus (Mt.ch.3.v.11) and to the day of Pentecost (Acts ch.1.v.5), then by extension to the experience of Cornelius's household (Acts ch.11.v.16). Many people feel that this is insufficient basis for such widespread use. Furthermore, because the term

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14. op.cit.7. pp.20-21.

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15. Michael Harper: This Is The Day. Hodder and Stoughton. 1979. pp.60-61.

'baptism' is so closely linked with conversion, regeneration and initiation, its usage here has often been used, or misunderstood, to indicate that a person only becomes a Christian at their baptism in the Spirit, or alternatively that a 'Spirit-baptized' Christian is a 'first-class' Christian and that those who have not had a similar experience are inferior. This gives rise to strong feelings:

"The experience of 'baptism in the Spirit' must be recognised. But the term must be condemned unequivocally." <sup>16</sup>

A Renewal Study Section <sup>17</sup> considered the problem of terminology and suggested alternatives, advising that although the phrase 'baptism in the Spirit' was useful practically, it should be used with careful explanation and alongside other terminology. The Study Section noted scriptural justification for the phrase 'being filled with the Spirit', which is also in common use. However, because 'fullness' is both subjective and relative to the Christian's stage of maturity, this phrase is somewhat inadequate as a description of an initiating experience. Again, there is scriptural warrant for 'being anointed with the Spirit', because the Holy Spirit is described as 'coming upon' believers (Acts ch.8.v.16; ch.10.v.44; ch.19.v.6). But in describing only the outward and visible, this term (which may be an equivalent of 'sealing' in the epistles: Eph.ch.1.v.13) does not convey the dynamic and varied results of the gift of the Spirit, and is thus of limited value. 'Receiving the Holy Spirit' is easily the most common phrase used in the New Testament to describe the experience, but because it is not always easily distinguishable from regeneration, it may cause misunderstanding in suggesting that some Christians have the Holy Spirit whilst others do not. Careful explanation is therefore necessary with this term too. The Study Section concludes that because of all the difficulties involved when biblical phraseology is used, a non-biblical

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16. Richard Hanson: review. Theological Renewal. No.19. Oct. 1981. p.4.

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17. Renewal Study Section ("Promise of the Spirit: what it is and what it is called"). Renewal No.55. Feb/Mar. 1975.



phrase, that of 'being released in the Spirit', may be more suitable. Although never used as such in the New Testament, it is an apt way of describing what Jesus spoke of in Jn.ch.7.vv.37-39 and an appropriate expression of the effect of the Holy Spirit on the church at Pentecost. But there are strong objections in some quarters to the use of this term too, and this is particularly so amongst Catholics because it implies an unsatisfactory understanding of the sacrament of water baptism. Donal Dorr comments:

"It seems to operate on a rather crudely realistic conception of the effect of the sacramental rite in an attempt to defend it against the danger of dismissing it as merely symbolic ... Furthermore the word 'release' suggests a crudely realistic conception of the presence of the Spirit 'in' the person but somehow unable to operate freely there." <sup>18</sup>

All this illustrates how difficult a problem terminology is, and it is clear that no one term is totally satisfactory to everyone. There is certainly less discussion about the matter now than there has been in the past, and this reflects the acceptance of flexibility and variation with regard to the terminology used. It is also felt that the event in itself and the life which it brings the Christian into are more important than its explanation. Harold Parks pointed out that few defining processes can boast one hundred per cent achievement, and that one cannot hope to define absolutely the activity of God. He did not wish to condone the loose usage of words nor to deny the need for definition of terms, but rather to make the point that the experience is important and must not be over-shadowed by the difficulties of terminology<sup>19</sup>. David Watson agrees with this when he writes:

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18. Donal Dorr: Remove the Heart of Stone. Gill and MacMillan. 1978. pp.91-92.

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19. Harold Parks: "Charisma: What's in a word?". Renewal No.52. Aug/Sept. 1974. p.19.

"In the last analysis it is the love and power and reality of the Spirit that counts, not the phrase. I am not saying that we should be careless in our use of Biblical words and phrases - far from it! But it is the greatest mistake to argue and fight over terminology of clearly secondary importance." <sup>20</sup>

The most controversial issue concerning baptism in the Spirit is that of the theology of the experience. Classical Pentecostalism characteristically presented baptism in the Spirit as the second stage in a two (or sometimes three) stage pattern of salvation. It was understood as an experience that was distinct and separate from conversion, and the Charismatic Movement assimilated this theology in its early years. In the course of time, however, diversification occurred, and many charismatics came to understand baptism in the Spirit as one factor in a fluid conversion-initiation process. The Catholic charismatics contributed their own distinctive understanding of the experience, and so there developed considerable diversity.

Some charismatics still adhere to a position similar to that of Classical Pentecostalism, which presents the baptism as the second stage in the salvation process, subsequent to conversion. The primary mode is essential for salvation, whereas the secondary mode provides additional equipment for service. Fred Pritchard presents the case for a 'second blessing' in an issue of Theological Renewal<sup>21</sup>. Although acknowledging that there are serious theological grounds for objecting to systems of 'two stage' and 'three stage' salvation, he stresses that there is a great practical advantage in being able to hold before believers the prospect of a second climactic work of God, baptism in the Spirit as it is generally understood in the Charismatic Movement. Pritchard reminds the reader that all second blessing doctrine has been developed with an immediate

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20. David Watson: One In The Spirit. Hodder and Stoughton. 1973. p.70.

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21. Fred Pritchard: "Can We Talk of a Second Blessing?" Theological Renewal. No.5. Feb/March. 1977. pp.23-25.

practical, pastoral concern, and he emphasises the prior place of actual experience and practice over theological theory. Whilst agreeing that there must be an appropriation of God's unending blessings by means of increasing faith, he still selects the baptism of the Spirit for special mention as a climactic experience, a 'second blessing', because the New Testament points to it and experience confirms it. There is a need for complete abandonment to God, and although conversion should be a complete endowment, the fact is that in practice it is often not. Pritchard concludes by stating that Paul's question in Acts ch.19.v.2 expects an answer in terms of recognisable experience, not theological deduction from what must have happened 'in principle':

"Where such an answer cannot be given in the affirmative, believers must be urged to seek this blessing, a baptism in pentecostal fire."

Arthur Wallis of the Bradford Circle has also insisted upon a 'second blessing', stating that the counter-arguments generally fail to take account of a factor of God's dealings with man that runs throughout the Bible<sup>22</sup>. This factor is that whilst something may be true as far as divine purpose and intention are concerned, it may not necessarily be true in human experience. Wallis shows that the epistles and Acts are not inconsistent in their treatment of Christian initiation. Baptism is a part of initiation, but the 'one baptism' of Eph.ch.4.v.5 is not exclusively of either water or spirit, but baptism into Christ. He feels that much of the current difficulty is due to the misplacement and separation of water baptism from baptism in the Spirit. Although regeneration and baptism in the Spirit may occur at the same time, they are quite distinct, and a failure to see this is a failure to see the truth of the 'one baptism'. Regeneration, water baptism and Spirit baptism all belong to initiation, and Acts provides a correct understanding of the doctrine of the epistles in this. Wallis then distinguishes between having the Spirit, as every Christian does, and receiving the Spirit. Jesus's reception of the Spirit

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22. Arthur Wallis: "A Fresh Look at the Baptism in the Holy Spirit". Theological Renewal. No.8. Feb/March 1978. pp.29-36.

at His baptism does not imply that He was devoid of the Spirit prior to this. Wallis disagrees with the view of baptism in the Spirit which presents it as nothing more than a release from within of the Spirit dwelling within the Christian. To regard it only as a release, he maintains, is to ignore the very clear biblical definitions and descriptions of what the baptism really is. He notes the use of the preposition 'upon' as opposed to 'in', which presupposes an outpouring upon the believer, and remarks that the laying on of hands indicates the twin concepts of impartation and reception. Feeling that there has been an element of unreality in much 'orthodox' teaching about the Holy Spirit, Wallis believes it is important to preserve what God has restored in the experience of charismatic renewal. His conclusion follows on from this:

"... we need to insist that the Spirit must first come upon before there can be empowering, and that there must be a receiving before there can be a releasing."

Arthur Wallis restates his position a year later in Restoration magazine:

"Having the Spirit does not preclude you from the need of receiving the Spirit ... The word that is used consistently and repeatedly to describe what happens in the baptism in the Spirit, but is never used simply of conversion is 'upon' ... Have you had an 'upon' experience of the Holy Spirit?" (his italics) <sup>23</sup>

Heribert Muhlen also agrees that the two events and experiences of baptism in water and baptism in the Spirit are distinct. He states that initiation into the basic Christian experience has several aspects which do not completely coincide. Because Catholicism sees in the laying on of hands by the apostles the origins of the sacrament of confirmation, Muhlen feels that confirmation can be accurately described as 'sacramental baptism of the Spirit'<sup>24</sup>.

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23. Arthur Wallis: "Baptism in the Spirit". Restoration. March/April 1979. p.19.

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24. Heribert Muhlen: A Charismatic Theology. Burns and Oates. 1978. pp.92-95.

The 'two-stage' theology described above may be compared with what we may call the 'one-stage' theology, which is becoming increasingly dominant in the Charismatic Movement. This trend is to view baptism in the Spirit as one of several fluid components of Christian initiation, and it is upheld both by those personally involved in the movement and those examining it from the outside. The work of the observer James Dunn has been extremely influential here, setting out as it does the New Testament grounds for the inter-relationship of several factors in an overall conversion-initiation experience<sup>25</sup>. Such an approach certainly reduces the theological tensions inherent in the 'two-stage' doctrine. The Renewal Study Section previously referred to<sup>26</sup> provides a note on Christian initiation, defining it as a constellation of things, including repentance, faith, baptism, church membership, and confirmation or laying-on of hands. It explains that initiation is not equivalent to salvation in the sense of one part missing meaning that a person is not saved. Nor is it equivalent to a single event, such as regeneration. Furthermore, although the New Testament practice seems to have been to bring the respective parts as close together as possible, initiation can be spread over a period of time. This is representative of the reasoning of exponents of this viewpoint. The difficulties of applying New Testament principles and practices to the present day are clearly set out in a reader's letter published in Renewal<sup>27</sup>, in which he points to a limitation of the Bible as the source-book for today's theology with respect to baptism in the Spirit. This is for a number of reasons, the first of which is that because the New Testament only gives examples of converts to Christianity, its pattern of conversion/initiation is inadequate to explain everyone's experience today. For instance, there are no examples in the Bible of people who have grown up in the Church and have thus grown into belief rather than having a

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25. See James D.G. Dunn: Baptism in the Holy Spirit. SCM. 1970.

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26. op.cit.5.

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27. Letter ("Sources of authority"). Renewal No.51. June/July 1974. pp.7-8.

single conversion experience. Secondly, the New Testament was written in and for a pagan/Jewish world in which hardly anyone had heard of Christianity. This is far removed from today's Christian or post-Christian culture in which people are surrounded by Christian concepts and stories (albeit often distorted) from their earliest years. The reader concludes from the above that although the various elements of conversion/initiation may be the same as in New Testament times, the way they are experienced today is often quite different.

One wonders, after considering these viewpoints, whether there really is as much of a divide between the two as there might at first seem to be. Exponents of the two-stage theory rarely approach the issue in the same way as Classical Pentecostalism did. An elder of a Bradford Circle church - which gives the impression in its literature that it is firmly promulgating a two-stage doctrine - explained:

"Baptism in the Spirit is part and parcel of the whole salvation package. We don't really believe in two stages, but because of deficient teaching and understanding, many get it in bits and pieces." 28

This is the basis for the thought of Fred Pritchard and Arthur Wallis described above, and people who share their view tend to regard a distinct second experience not so much as the ideal but rather as God's provision for a regrettable situation. Initiation now commonly takes place over a period of time, whereas in the New Testament it normally occurred all at once. The failure of Christians to receive the 'complete package' is precisely the reason why baptism in the Spirit is so often presented by charismatics as a separate experience to conversion and initiation. Those who adhere to the 'one-stage' position accept that baptism in the Spirit may be a second experience for some, but they believe that this is not the biblical norm and that it is therefore erroneous to construct a doctrine around it. Tom Small makes the necessary distinction when he writes:

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28. Interview with an elder of a Bradford Circle church. February 1981.

"It is important to notice that it is one thing to testify to a new experience of the working of the Holy Spirit, and quite another to identify this experience as 'the second blessing'. The one is a description of what has happened, the other presupposes a particular theological interpretation of it." <sup>29</sup>

Smail also points out that the different sequences in Acts where the same elements appear in different temporal combinations constitute a salutary warning to leave the Holy Spirit His freedom. He advocates restraint in making dogmatic assertions, and describes his own position in the words of John Taylor:

"... my own reading of it (the New Testament) convinces me that the Pentecostalist is right when he calls the bestowal of this gift Baptism in the Holy Spirit. But I think that he is distorting the evidence when he teaches that this is something subsequent to and distinct from becoming a Christian." <sup>30</sup>

Although the polarization between these two positions may not be so extreme as it appears, some people feel that there is sufficient incompatibility for the baptism in the Spirit issue to constitute a serious hindrance to unity in the Charismatic Movement. It is therefore interesting that a number of people occupy a position somewhere inbetween these two theological camps. Harold Parks<sup>31</sup> stated that God is not restoring what has been called the 'second blessing', but is rather putting back into place a 'missing blessing'. This missing blessing has for a long time been muted at the moment of Christian initiation, but Parks believed that the situation would be rectified in the case of those who would become

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29. op.cit.2. pp.38-39.

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30. op.cit.2. pp.87,142.

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31. Harold Parks: "What's in a Phrase?" Renewal No.49. Feb/March 1974. p.21.

Christians in the future. The 'second blessing' is therefore not a second blessing at all, but the recovery of a lost part of the first blessing. David Watson approaches the issue slightly differently by making a rather ingenious suggestion. This is the establishment of a double meaning of the phrase 'baptism in the Spirit', and he does this by separating in time two aspects of one whole, the status and the experience<sup>32</sup>. Although not totally convincing, it is nevertheless thought-provoking and may help to bridge existent divisions in thought on the subject. A different approach again is taken by Larry Christenson, who notes the two-fold meaning of the term and says that in its experiential sense it is the Spirit being actualised, or coming to more conscious manifestation in one's life<sup>33</sup>.

Christenson's understanding of baptism in the Spirit is the same as that of the Catholic charismatics. They describe the baptism neither as a 'second experience' nor as an aspect of a single complex process, but integrate the saving efficacy of the sacraments with the experienced effects of the baptism. Baptism in the Spirit does not fit into any existent category, but it makes much of traditional theology operational, thus holding together both continuity and newness. Catholic doctrine teaches that a person becomes a Christian and receives the Holy Spirit at their infant baptism, and baptism in the Spirit is therefore understood as the coming to fruition, or the coming out into the open, of what is already there. It is stressed that nothing new has been conferred: it has always been there, but now becomes operative. This understanding of baptismal regeneration introduces a new factor into the discussion, namely that of Christian conversion. Catholic charismatics are faced with the task of explaining the sudden, dramatic change in some people who before showed no evidence of being Christians but now become committed followers of Christ, whilst maintaining alongside this that there is no essential difference in their status as Christians. Whereas a Protestant charismatic would respond by saying that such people were not Christians beforehand, the Catholic

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32. David Watson: One In The Spirit. Hodder and Stoughton. 1975.

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33. op.cit.1.



finds this unacceptable because it would be contrary to Catholic theology. The tension and contradiction that result are very much apparent. Cardinal Suenens, for example, writes of forty Jesuits who:

"... had encountered the Charismatic Renewal and through it experienced what one might call a 're-conversion', as it were, to Jesus Christ and a new openness to the Holy Spirit." <sup>34</sup>

Earlier, he writes:

"We are conditioned to count as 'Christians' those who frequent the sacraments even to some degree: we rarely try to determine whether or not these same people put their faith into practice at other levels. There are many who are Christians on the surface. Authentic Christians are more rare. This being so, it is important to plan pastoral measures that will reach these different levels from the sociological Christians to those who are fully committed to their faith." <sup>35</sup>

Suenens copes delicately with the slender distinctions which he seeks to make, but his distinction between 'Christians' and 'authentic Christians' is by definition invalid, and it provides a pointer to the difficulties which Catholic charismatics face when articulating the charismatic experience within the context of their traditional theology. Certain developments in Catholic theology have, however, provided a framework within which it can be expressed. Peter Hebblethwaite speaks of a shift away from the *ex opere operato* or quasi-automatic operation of the sacraments towards the need to arouse faith in the recipient <sup>36</sup>. This

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34. Cardinal Suenens: A New Pentecost?. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1975. p.213.

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35. *op.cit.*34. pp.148-149.

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36. Peter Hebblethwaite: The Runaway Church. Fount. 1978. p.60.

provides a context for the Catholic Charismatic Movement's recognition that there is need for explicit faith and commitment for a person to be truly Christian. Gerard Noel notes a similar point in his description of the new theology which stresses subjectivity rather than objectivity, and is existential in relating religion to Man's everyday experience:

"Each man, according to the new theology, is supremely free and must always give a fully free - and therefore fully responsible - reaction to the demands of duty, faith and, above all, love. He seeks a truly personal relationship with a Jesus whom he desires to know, love and understand - a Jesus who is not obscured by unintelligible titles or attributes that constitute a barrier between himself and other men." <sup>37</sup>

This provides a legitimate place for the step further in submission and commitment to Jesus which has become characteristic of Catholic Charismatic Renewal. The emphases of the Charismatic Movement are therefore complimentary to the emphases of the new theology, and in this sense the Charismatic Renewal is quite fashionable. Within this context, then, the baptism in the Spirit experience and the new zeal and commitment which it produces are both acceptable and desirable.

It would appear that in many cases, what Catholics are experiencing in their baptism in the Spirit is, in Protestant terms, their initial conversion to Christianity. One person described his experience as follows:

"Someone prayed for me as I committed my life to Christ. There was praise welling up in tongues and a desire to read Scripture. I did not really have any faith in God before and wouldn't tell people about Christ. Now I wanted to. It was an absolute turning point."

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37. Gerard Noel: The Anatomy of the Catholic Church. Hodder and Stoughton. 1980. p.133.

He referred to this as his baptism in the Spirit, or release of the Spirit as he preferred to call it. He believed that he was a Christian prior to this, that the Holy Spirit is within a person from their infant baptism, but that one can still ask for and receive a fresh sending of the Spirit. Through the release of the Spirit, one:

"... really comes to know Jesus as a person, the centre of one's life, where previously one only knew about him." <sup>38</sup>

In 1974, Ian Petit wrote in the Newsletter:

"Personally, I believe that when the Charismatic Renewal started in the Catholic Church, it was found that before Catholics, in general, could grasp the role of the Holy Spirit as giver of gifts, they needed to be re-evangelised and see, first, the role of Christ as Saviour." <sup>39</sup>

Confusion concerning initiation into the Church and Christian conversion and commitment is evident in the Life in the Spirit Seminars. Goodnews comments:

"Strangely enough, though the seminars are often given to committed Christians, some of the items included by the author of the letter to the Hebrews in the elementary teaching would have to be covered: the need for conversion, the teaching on baptism (i.e. the true meaning of being baptized in the Spirit), the teaching on the laying on of hands (i.e. the importance of prayer of the Church), of the prayer community." <sup>40</sup> (my italics)

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38. Interview with a Catholic charismatic. August 1980.

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39. Ian Petit: "Further Thoughts on the Charismatic Movement". Newsletter. Jan/Feb. 1974.

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40. Goodnews. March/April 1974.

The seminars are trying to hold together people's status as committed Christians on the basis of their baptism and church activity, with the recognition that these same people need to come to the point of commitment to Christ. It is evident that this cannot be accommodated without theological and doctrinal adaptation. A full account of Ian Petit's own experience is found in Anointed With The Spirit, from which the following passage is taken:

"... I suddenly understood the gospel ... now I had come to understand, I was through the wall; I saw the Good News, understood at last what it meant to be in Christ Jesus.

"Now it seems extraordinary to me that after all my education and training that (sic) I had so misunderstood the gospel. I was trying to practise the gospel with my power, hoping that once I had succeeded then I could receive the promises of Jesus."<sup>41</sup>

This again appears to have the characteristics of initial conversion. However, it would be wrong to generalize about baptism in the Spirit always being equal to or simultaneous with conversion in the case of Catholics. Ian Petit states that he received and practised the gift of tongues before the realization described above took place. This is but one indication that the phenomenon of baptism in the Spirit may be much more complex than it may at first appear to be.

Cardinal Suenens remarks that the question of a 'new' sending of the Son or the Holy Spirit has long been considered by mystics and theologians<sup>42</sup>, and he goes on to consider the crucial question, 'What makes an authentic Christian?' In a consideration of the Christians of the early church in New Testament times, he states that:

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41. Ian Petit in: Anointed With The Spirit. Mayhew-McCrimmon. 1978. p.58.

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42. op.cit.34. p.85.

"A Christian is a changed person, a convert: he has turned away from himself, so as to adhere to Jesus of Nazareth who, for his sake, died and rose from the dead. He has made a personal discovery of Jesus and acknowledged him as the Christ, the unique Son of the Father, the Anointed One of the Holy Spirit. He has found in Jesus the Saviour and Lord of all mankind." <sup>43</sup> (my italics)

Suenens then recognises that with regard to 'today's Christian' there is often a discrepancy between the New Testament ideal and the modern reality:

"... (Vatican II) presupposed as a basic hypothesis that the Church was made up of authentic Christians or, at least, those trying to be so. Now the facts compel us to question the validity of this presupposition. Again, when we speak of a Christian, of whom and what are we speaking? This is a painful question because what we are asking is: 'Do Christians in general today believe with a personal, dedicated and genuine faith?' " <sup>44</sup>

Suenens has understood the situation, but his response to it is to speak of "two types of Christians", the nominal and the authentic. This is a characteristic approach of Catholic charismatics and is unsatisfactory from a biblical perspective. However, three theologians stand out for the way in which they face up to the implications of the issue and deal with it with a particular freedom and probing that is refreshing. These theologians are Francis Sullivan, himself involved in the Charismatic Movement, Rene Laurentin, and Donal Dorr.

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43. op.cit.34. pp.117-118.

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44. op.cit.34. pp.122-124.

Francis Sullivan gave a series of talks at a conference sponsored by the National Service Committee, and the following is taken from transcripts of these<sup>45</sup>. He recognises at the outset that the question of what is happening when people have the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit is the basic question for Catholics. A theological interpretation of baptism in the Spirit begins with the experience: people are having it, and there is adequate witness to what it means for Catholics who have already received baptism and confirmation and are therefore fully initiated. Sullivan concludes that baptism in the Spirit brings people onto a decisively new level. Noting that most Catholics understand it as a coming to full fruition of what has already been received, he comments:

"There is reason to think perhaps even God has accommodated himself to our practice in this manner."

Sullivan then speaks of "a basic pastoral problem" to be faced by all churches which practise infant baptism, that of the grave danger that Christianity becomes merely cultural:

"Charismatic renewal is presenting the gospel to people at an age when they can make the choice. Charismatic renewal is meeting this void in our pastoral life. Charismatic renewal is the question of whether you want Jesus Christ for your Lord or not ... Charismatic renewal is recognising the need of evangelising Christians ... "

Infant baptism must be transforming for the infant in question in a spiritual way that one cannot see or recognise: it has to be transforming in some sense or else it is not really the gift of the Spirit. Many people would feel that Sullivan has put his finger on the crucial point here without realizing it, namely that infant baptism may not involve the gift of the Holy Spirit at all. Sullivan disagrees with the common explanation of the baptism as a breaking into consciousness of the gift that is already there. He describes it as a new sending, which is related to the presence

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45. Francis Sullivan. Hawkstone Hall. Undated.

of the Spirit already there sacramentally and fulfills what has already been given. Sullivan claims that this understanding of baptism in the Spirit is an equally Catholic interpretation, and indeed a better one. What is happening in baptism in the Spirit should ideally be happening in confirmation.

Francis Sullivan has progressed beyond the thinking of many Catholic theologians. Whether one chooses to infer that the 'decisive new level' he speaks of is conversion or not, he clearly recognises that personal commitment is essential to Christianity. Protestants will find it disappointing that he does not follow through the implications of this, but he does nevertheless suggest that sacraments do not provide the complete picture in the essentials of a person's Christian standing.

Rene Laurentin also questions the traditional understanding of the sacrament of baptism, stating that the praiseworthy desire not to separate baptism in water and baptism in the Spirit has led to an unnuanced identification of the two. In their formulation of a justification for the practice of infant baptism, theologians have increasingly tended to equate baptism received by one unaware of it and baptism received from personal conviction. He follows through the implications of these statements:

"... Most Christians today live in a secularized world in which the faith is no longer transmitted as in the past and very many of those baptized as infants never become aware of their baptismal commitment.

"The problem today, therefore, is this: What does baptism really mean in a Church in which the majority of the 680 million baptized Catholics on the books are not instructed in their faith or do not profess it or do not live it? ... In the past, such failures in faith would have led to excommunication, but today these unbelieving Christians simply go on having their children baptized! The degeneration is continuing, and we must ask ourselves what it can mean to have 'received the Spirit' when these words have no verifiable meaning at the level of awareness and life and human existence and when the environing world

stimulates the baptized person to materialism rather than to faith."

Laurentin likens the state of the baptised child to that of a child in the womb: it does not yet breathe but will do so when it is born, and if it does not then it will have been born dead.

"Given our situation, we must be on guard against a theology that is really an ideology that hides reality from us ... Our real concern here must not be to develop a theology of baptism in the Spirit but to grasp the pastoral and theological meaning of this baptism as an experienced reality."

It is in this area that conflict, and indeed incompatibility, with Catholic doctrine occurs. Laurentin has detected three ways by which baptism in the Spirit can be related to the theological tradition of Catholicism. The first of these is Sullivan's interpretation of it in the light of St. Thomas Aquinas's theology, but interestingly enough Laurentin rejects it on the grounds that baptism in the Spirit is implicitly sacramental in its vocabulary and therefore should be more specifically related to the theology of the sacraments. He suggests two alternatives, the first of which is concerned with the distinction between the opus operatum ('the work done'), that is the objective action embodied in the sacramental rite, and the opus operantis ('the action of the doer'), that is the action of the recipient in receiving the sacrament with faith and thereby profiting from it. Baptism in the Spirit would thus belong to the latter category, since its purpose is to make sacramental baptism effective where so often it is not. The other alternative, which he prefers, is that of interpreting baptism in the Spirit at a still deeper level by relating it to some far more notable and more ancient theological categories. These are the three successive moments to be found in every sacrament: the 'sacramentum', the 'res et sacramentum' and the 'res'. The first is the external rite or sacramental sign; the second, the effect that is independent of the recipient's dispositions and also points to the final effect; and the third, the ultimate effect, that is the sharing in divine life that is the purpose of the sacraments. Baptism in the Spirit is therefore the 'res', the ultimate effect, and the effective accomplishment



in a Christian's life of what baptism called for but to some extent failed to accomplish. Laurentin has thereby faced up to the pastoral implications of the baptism and has by implication moved away from an 'ex opere operatum' view of the sacraments<sup>46</sup>.

Donal Dorr breaks new ground in charismatic theology with his book Remove The Heart Of Stone. He aims to adopt a psychological approach, which avoids the reductionism that holds that the experience of baptism in the Spirit alone is significant, regardless of the meaning of it. He makes the important point that the experience in question does not always mean exactly what the person who undergoes it thinks it means, and he goes on to distinguish between the two categories of intrinsic and imposed meaning. The intrinsic meaning is a built-in part of the experience itself, whereas the imposed meaning is an interpretation added on from outside the experience. The experience is open to a variety of imposed meanings or interpretations, and this accounts for the diversity of theologies of baptism in the Spirit<sup>47</sup>.

Dorr states that there is strong scriptural support for the view that if a person had no previous deep or evident Christian experience, then baptism in the Spirit is really the person's first conversion. He continues:

"While not accepting the extreme Evangelical view of the minimum requirements of faith I find it very helpful because it provokes us into calling in question the usual presuppositions about what is normal for a Christian."<sup>48</sup>

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46. Rene Laurentin: Catholic Pentecostalism. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1977. pp.38-47.

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47. op.cit.18. pp.36-38.

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48. op.cit.18. pp.42-43.

Turning to consider the question whether the kind of impoverished Christian life which shows little or no evidence of commitment to Christ merits the name 'Christian faith' at all, he is hesitant to answer this in the negative. But of the "extreme evangelical view" that such people have not been 'saved', he says:

"Can we deny that there is a large measure of truth in this judgment? What right have we to define 'being saved' in a way that bears little or no relation to its existential meaning? Not that we should limit salvation to an experienced sense of liberation. Neither Evangelical nor Catholic would wish to do that. There are important moral, social and eschatological dimensions to salvation as well. But must we not admit that the salvation of such a troubled Christian is as yet a very partial one? We may not agree with the all-or-nothing judgment of the Evangelical. But equally we must admit the weakness of an all-or-nothing Catholic version which explains salvation in terms of an unexperienceable ontological reality and considers the experience of the person as quite accidental or irrelevant. The only way forward seems to be to drop the crude simplicities of both traditions and face the fact that Christian salvation has many dimensions which, despite their intrinsic links with each other, are to some extent separable in this life. All of these dimensions are important, even essential; and not least in the experienced dimension of personal liberation." <sup>49</sup>

Dorr correctly states that the Charismatic Renewal has not yet fully succeeded either in its theory or in its practice in reconciling the Pentecostal spirituality centred on baptism in the Spirit with traditional Catholic spirituality. As long as this unresolved tension remains, he believes that the movement will not seem fully at home within the mainstream of Catholic life<sup>50</sup>. This is seldom admitted by Catholic

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49. op.cit.18. pp.46-47.

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50. op.cit.18. p.56.

charismatics, but it is a realistic and honest approach, as is his categorical statement:

"What then of the baptised adult Christian who has no such Christian experience? I would say that apart from some special situations ... such a person has either abandoned Christian faith or has never personally appropriated it ... the adult believer must be a conscious believer in some sense." <sup>51</sup>

When Catholic charismatics have followed through the implications of the effect of the baptism in the Spirit experience on the life and faith of an individual, they have been led to acknowledge the necessity of some conscious decision and commitment before a person can be described as a Christian in the New Testament sense. The need for such a 'conversion' has thus become increasingly acceptable in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, even though there is something of a reticence about using the term openly. But if theological recognition of this is lacking, the need to evangelise fellow-Catholics and explain the gospel to them is usually fully appreciated. The Life in the Spirit Seminars devote several weeks to an explanation of the gospel and the need for Christian commitment. It is in this area that the baptism in the Spirit experience has had a particular impact.

Psychological studies of charismatic phenomena have understandably centred around glossolalia. However, Kilian McDonnell and Donal Dorr have both commented upon psychological factors that may be operative in baptism in the Spirit. McDonnell notes the general agreement amongst Classical Pentecostals and participants in the Charismatic Movement that it is at the very least imprudent to lead a psychologically disturbed person into the experience of baptism in the Spirit and speaking in tongues. However, he does state that psychological factors such as suggestion and trance may be present at baptism in the Spirit, the first experience of tongues, or subsequent exercise of tongues<sup>52</sup>. Donal Dorr actually attempts a synthesis

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51. op.cit.18. p.87.

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52. Kilian McDonnell: Charismatic Renewal and the Churches. Seabury Press. 1976. pp.147,153.

of psychology and theology in understanding the processes involved in baptism in the Spirit. He bases his thoughts upon the theory that the process of baptism in the Spirit involves a 'letting go' to God and to the charismatic group, a theory which explains how beginning to speak in tongues can for many people be an effective focus and a powerful symbol of letting go. This is reminiscent of the sociological study by Gerlach and Hine, which described glossolalia as the 'bridge-burning' act by means of which an individual identified himself with a new group of people and severed his connection with his previous social group and ideology<sup>53</sup>. Dorr, however, refers to the work of the psychologist Ira Progoff, which promotes the idea that many people today are in need of a major psychological reorientation that some recent theorists would call a 'psychic conversion'. Whilst recognising that the Progoff-type of psychological breakthrough can take place in people who see no Christian meaning in it, and indeed in people who have no religious faith at all, he believes that a specifically Christian imposed meaning can be given to the psychological process. Baptism in the Spirit may also involve a 'letting go' to the group which is supporting and praying for the person concerned. After the individual has received the baptism, they will often have attained a new intimacy with the rest of the group, and the group as a whole frequently finds itself more closely knit together by the experience. Following an extensive discussion of these factors, Dorr suggests sensible safeguards to avoid manipulation. Care should be taken not to exercise any undue psychological pressure, and it should be emphasised to the seeker that God does not always act according to a rigid pattern where the baptism in the Spirit experience is concerned<sup>54</sup>. Although many participants in the Charismatic Movement would express hesitation over his theories, the majority would certainly agree with his emphasis upon the necessity of these safeguards.

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53. Luther Gerlach and Virginia Hine: People, Power, Change. Bobbs-Merrill. 1970.

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54. op.cit.18. pp.184-136.

It will be obvious from the above that there are numerous different understandings of baptism in the Spirit, all of which have received criticism from exponents of conflicting views. A number of critical points should, however, be particularly stressed with regard to second-stage theology. The most serious defect of such teaching is that it implies a first-class and second-class Christianity. Those Christians who have gone on to experience the baptism in the Holy Spirit are regarded as better-equipped, more able to discern God's guidance and in closer communion with Him by means of this new empowering by the Spirit. However much charismatics may object to seeing it stated as such, it is the inevitable implication of this theology that Christians who - for whatever reason - have not been baptised in the Spirit, are inferior spiritually to those who have. There is no escape from this conclusion and it is a serious fault in second-blessing doctrine. A second criticism is that many presentations of this teaching give the impression that the baptism in the Spirit provides the key to instant success as a Christian. People are often led to believe that the effects of the baptism will be immediate and dramatic, and this can result in bewilderment and disillusionment if they do not prove to be so. Many people also find that after the initial euphoria has worn off, the old problems and failings return. The beneficial effects of baptism in the Spirit are obviously not as immediate and unconditional as one might assume from the claims of some charismatics. This suggests that doctrine has been too simplistic at this point and is in need of qualification. A further problem with regard to 'second-stage' doctrine is that it implies a quantifying of the Holy Spirit. He is presented as being received by the believer in two installments, the first at conversion, and the second (the major one) at baptism in the Spirit. A theology which portrays the work of the Holy Spirit according to such a rigid set of rules curtails Him His freedom to work in different people's lives as He sees fit, and is thus a denial of divine sovereignty.

There have nevertheless been developments in the theology of baptism in the Spirit, and these developments have taken the form of a moving away from second-blessing theology. It is an observable fact in the Charismatic Movement that a person's understanding and teaching of the baptism in the Holy Spirit tends to start off clearly defined, being based upon the experience of that person or their associates. However, as time goes on

and the person becomes more aware of the complex issues involved, the biblical and theological questions, and the fact that participants have had different experiences and hold resolutely different opinions, they cease to see things in such clearly delineated terms and speak more generally about the whole topic. The view has become increasingly commonplace that there is no single pattern for the Christian, and this is clearly expressed by Gerald Coates and Hugh Thompson:

"... Cornelius and his household entered fully into initial salvation (justification, sanctification and gifts of the Holy Spirit) in one glorious moment! Since many do build upon the complete Christ from the word go, non-Biblical (Wesleyan!) terms such as 'second blessing' can be misleading. And equally it can be said that an undue emphasis on any one Biblical term (be it 'baptism in the Spirit', 'receiving the Spirit', or 'born again') or any one Bible example (such as Cornelius), can stumble some who have genuinely experienced Christ by stages." <sup>55</sup> (their italics)

Francis Sullivan is another person who does not believe that rigid laws can be constructed with regard to the way God's dealings will happen, nor to the timing, circumstances, and manifestations:

"It can mean any number of different things for different people to move from the state of grace they are in to a new state of grace for them. Nor do I think this can happen only once in a person's life, a once-for-all experience. It is for many people, but for others there may be other times of great grace, and steps forward. I don't see why it should be only once, nor why it should always be the same kind of crisis experience. What is called for is a new transformation, a moving on. That has infinite variety depending on the infinite variety of individuals. God works with each individual as an individual." <sup>56</sup>

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55. Gerald Coates and Hugh Thompson: Free From Sin. Private publication.

Sullivan's perception and frankness here point to the shortcomings of much baptism in the Spirit theology produced by the Charismatic Movement. His fellow-Catholic, Donal Dorr has helpfully noted the three different forms or patterns by which entry into the state of baptism in the Spirit commonly occurs. These are the dramatic pattern (which charismatics have tended to adopt as the ideal), the delayed-action pattern, and the cumulative pattern<sup>57</sup>. It is the cumulative pattern which has received increasing attention in more recent years, and it is now accepted that the experience of many people will be a more gradual process of growth and a deepening in spiritual experience. This gradual awakening and endowment may be described as a 'baptism in the Spirit' with equal validity as the more climactic experience.

Another notable development is that baptism in the Spirit is now increasingly viewed in the context of a process of progressive Christian growth. Regret is frequently expressed that it has been implied that slow, steady spiritual growth is unnecessary, and that charismatic experience can lead the believer in short-cut fashion to full religious maturity. In 1967, Eric Houfe stated that there were two other experiences in addition to baptism in water and baptism in the Spirit, these being "immersion in the Word" and "immersion in the Cross":

"... if these experiences are missed then the continuing experience in the Holy Spirit is weakened and rendered ineffective."<sup>58</sup>

Well over a decade later, this viewpoint which looks beyond the baptism in

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56. Francis Sullivan: taped talk on "Holy Spirit baptism". Hawkstone Hall. (Undated)

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57. op.cit.18. pp.52-53.

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58. Eric Houfe: "Deeper Yet". Renewal No.11. Oct/Nov. 1967. pp.9-11.

the Spirit experience is at last gathering support. In addition to this, it is recognised that a Christian may have any number of what may be described as "fillings of the Spirit", according to the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in providing for particular needs at the appropriate times. Fluidity in understanding and a certain flexibility in theology have therefore become characteristic: the realization has dawned that attempts to define something which cannot be defined other than in relatively broad terms can lead to considerable inaccuracy and misrepresentation.



Chapter 6.THE CHARISMATIC GIFTS: PART IA Definition and Understanding

It is the rediscovery and use of the charismatic gifts that has given the Charismatic Movement its name. The word 'charismatic' is taken directly from the greek  $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\mu\alpha$ , which means a 'free gift' or 'gift of grace', and the movement originally emphasised in particular those gifts listed by the apostle Paul in 1 Cor.ch.12.vv.8-10: the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, speaking in tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. It soon became widely recognised, however, that other lists of gifts can be found in the New Testament. Rom.ch.12.vv.7-8, for example, lists service, teaching, exhortation, contributing, aiding, and acts of mercy, whilst Eph.ch.4.v.11 speaks of gifted individuals - apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers - and 1 Cor.ch.7.vv.7-8 seems to refer to marriage and celibacy as gifts. Another passage which is frequently cited with reference to gifts is 1 Pet.ch.4.vv.9-11, but many participants in the Charismatic Movement increasingly emphasise that Scripture does not provide an exhaustive list of gifts and that the charismata are in fact innumerable. There has thus developed a much broader understanding of charismatic gifts throughout the Charismatic Movement. Tom Smail understands theology itself as being a charism, stating that it contains "something of the gift of discernment", can "test the Spirits" by "the test of the gospel" and also has within itself a "gift of teaching"<sup>1</sup>. There is frequent mention amongst Catholic charismatics of the "gift of tears" as a means by which one can express the inexpressible, and this gift is now becoming more recognised and accepted amongst Protestant charismatics<sup>2</sup>. Walter Hollenweger had already noted in his

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1. Tom Smail: Editorial. Theological Renewal. No.1.

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2. See, for example John Richards: "Tears. A gift of the Spirit?" Renewal. No.86. April/May 1980. pp.31-33.

study of Classical Pentecostalism that the black Classical Pentecostal Movement in the U.S.A. has regarded political involvement and picketing as a gift of the Spirit<sup>3</sup>, and analysis and listing of the charismata in Neo-Pentecostalism likewise tends to be highly individualistic and to reflect the interests and abilities of the person concerned. Even the enumeration of New Testament gifts shows wide variation. Kurt Koch, an American writer whose books have been circulated in Britain, decides that it has references to twenty-four gifts, but states:

"No one need take offence at our enumeration of the gifts of the Spirit. It is unimportant whether we find nine or more in the various texts. My arriving at 24 is due to my exhaustive treatment of all the texts in question and the inclusion of Jesus as the first and greatest gift."<sup>4</sup>

This flexibility concerning the charismata means that we find a rich diversity of gifts in the Charismatic Movement. Whereas in the nineteen-sixties, it was generally intended to refer to the 1 Cor.ch.12 list of nine, the term has by now become rather vague and indeterminate. A great many talents and abilities are described as 'charismatic gifts', and it is very loosely applied. One therefore inevitably finds contradictory statements. Some feel that there is no possibility of someone who is walking with God not having charismatic gifts, because the presence of God is in itself charismatic. Others do not agree with the necessity of the gifts in each individual, believing firmly that the infilling of the Holy Spirit can occur without the manifestation of the gifts. The puzzling contradiction here is best explained by different understandings of the same terminology: 'charisma' may be used in a generalized sense to refer simply to 'grace', or more specifically to refer to an actual gift. The fluidity of the concept of 'charismatic gift' means that the movement can

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3. Walter Hollenweger: Pentecostalism. SCM Press.

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4. Kurt Koch: Charismatic Gifts. Association for Christian Evangelism. 1975.p.108.

comfortably encompass many different positions on the matter. Some people emphasise a distinction between "higher" and "lower" gifts, for instance. Michael Harper, however, disputes this. He queries the popular translation of 1 Cor.ch.12.v.31 and translates the greek imperative as an indicative: "... but you do earnestly desire the higher gifts". Claiming the support of the context, Harper says that Paul is not encouraging the grading of the gifts, but is rather rebuking the Corinthians for doing so and so neglecting "the more excellent way" of manifesting them. In 1 Cor.ch.14.v.56, the context similarly speaks against any distinction between higher and lower gifts. The distinction made by Paul is not with regard to the intrinsic value of the gift itself, but rather the number of people that it edifies. There should be more concern about gifts which build up others than those which bring personal blessing only<sup>5</sup>.

The primary controversy concerning charismatic gifts, however, has not centred around the definition of the gifts, but rather the question whether the gifts exist today at all. The issue of the cessation of the charismata has provoked heated debate since the birth of Classical Pentecostalism, and participants in both Classical and Neo-Pentecostalism have been accused of promoting at best human delusions and at worst satanic counterfeits. Whilst it has been accepted that the 'ordinary' gifts of the Spirit - teaching, offering hospitality, and suchlike - have continued in the Church throughout the ages, it has customarily been the opinion of the main Protestant denominations that the extraordinary gifts of 1 Cor.ch.12 disappeared from the Church after the Apostolic Age. This position has been presented by a number of authors. Some adhere to the theory that the extraordinary gifts ceased once the Church was established or out of danger, or once the New Testament canon was completed. According to this view these gifts decreased through the first few centuries and then halted altogether in the fourth or fifth centuries. Others believe that the extraordinary gifts existed solely for the purpose of authenticating the apostles, and were therefore encountered only in connection with the ministry of the apostles and their direct associates<sup>6</sup>. Another variation

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5. Michael Harper: Walk In The Spirit. Hodder and Stoughton. 1968. pp.67-69.

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6. For detailed presentations of this view see, B.B. Warfield: Counterfeit Miracles, Banner of Truth, 1972; Walter J. Chantry: Signs of the Apostles, Banner of Truth, 1973; A.A. Hoekema: Holy Spirit Baptism, Paternoster Press, 1972. A more recent study is that of Douglas Judisch: An Evaluation of Claims to the Charismatic Gifts. Baker Book House and Co. (U.S.A.) 1978. Judisch states that the gifts are inextricably connected with prophecy as authenticating signs. He is one of the first authors to bring to bear on the discussion certain passages from Daniel and Zechariah.

within this general position is the dispensational view that because sign gifts such as tongues and prophecy were directed primarily to the Jews, they were withdrawn at the close of the apostolic era when Israel's rejection of the Messiah became official and final. The debate is not over the 'natural' gifts but over the 'extraordinary' gifts of 1 Cor.ch.12.

Participants in the Charismatic Movement have found it necessary to reply to the proponents of these theories in order to validate the claim of the movement that it is genuinely of the Holy Spirit. Protestants usually find no problem in acknowledging that the charismatic gifts have not functioned for extensive periods in church history, and often refer to a 'restoration' of the charismata in the present day. Catholics, however, find that the authority accorded to church tradition makes it more necessary to show that the charisms have always been recognised and upheld by this tradition. Whilst pointing to the continuous presence of the gifts in the Church, they also seek to account for the fact that these have been more prominent at some periods than at others. Heribert Muhlen comments:

"The gifts of the Spirit for the salvation of others have always been alive in the Church, but Christ distributes the gifts of his Spirit more abundantly at times of fossilization, of decline or even of historical change in the appearance of the Church."<sup>7</sup>

And Rene Laurentin writes:

"Church history shows them (the gifts) being given again at moments when Christianity was really vital, and especially at times of change."<sup>8</sup>

The booklet Charismatic Renewal - Is It Really Catholic? is so arranged as

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7. Heribert Muhlen: A Charismatic Theology. Burns and Oates. 1978. p.11.

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8. Rene Laurentin: Catholic Pentecostalism. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1977. p.19.

to show that Catholic understanding of Scripture, traditional Catholic theology, and traditional Catholic spirituality all contain instruction and reference to the charismatic gifts<sup>9</sup>. And elsewhere Robert Faricy maintains that charisms have always been a part of the Christian tradition:

"Every age has had its gifted teachers, its great religious leaders, its miracle workers. The founding and rapid spread of the Franciscans marked a great outpouring of the charism of evangelical poverty. There have always been those with the charism of missionary work ... and there have always been many with the charism of consecrated celibacy ..."<sup>10</sup>

This illustrates the very broad interpretation of the term 'charismatic gift' or 'charism' in the Catholic Church. Faricy goes on to point out that charisms are referred to fourteen times in the documents of Vatican II, which took place years before a Catholic Charismatic Renewal was in existence<sup>11</sup>. Donald Gelpi has some strong words for those who believe in the cessation of the charismata and deny the authenticity of the Charismatic Renewal on these grounds:

".. one cannot ... conclude that the Spirit is incapable of bestowing the same gifts again, should an historical need for them arise.

"It would be theologically rash to imagine that the charismatic gifts which were granted to the first generation of Christians can have no other historical role to play beyond the

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9. Derek Lance: Charismatic Renewal - Is It Really Catholic?. Mayhew-McCrimmon. 1978.

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10. Robert Faricy in Sullivan and Faricy: Ignatian Exercises. Charismatic Renewal. Centrum Ignatium Spiritualitis. Rome. 1977. p.48..

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11. ibid.

one they initially performed. It is God who decides and guides the course of salvation history, not we. In the matter of the granting of charismatic gifts, therefore, theologians have no legislative function to perform. Their role is subservient to divine grace." 12

Cardinal Suenens deals with the problem with the help of an analogy borrowed from Kilian McDonnell, which compares the gamut of charismatic possibilities to a spectrum which can be numbered A to Z:

"It is understood of course that any such analogy can only be relative and that no one can catalogue the dynamic, multiform, and unpredictable action of God. Along this spectrum he (McDonnell) distinguishes two sectors: A to P, and P to Z. Let A to P stand for the ordinary gifts, and P to Z for what are called the extraordinary gifts. Christians, he says, are more or less familiar with section A to P, but they do not expect that the gifts in the second part of the spectrum will be manifested in the normal life of a Christian. As far as ordinary believers are concerned, this sector appears to them as the private domain of some saints and other exceptional persons. They will readily admit that in the early church the whole spectrum of gifts was manifested in their fullness, but one no longer expects to find these on a large scale among Christians of the twentieth century. This is what has been normally presented in our teaching and no one ever thought it necessary to question it." 13

Edward O'Connor notes the difference he has detected between the role which charisms have played throughout the greater part of the church's history,

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12. Donald L. Gelpi: Pentecostalism: A Theological Viewpoint. Paulist Press. 1971.

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13. Cardinal Suenens: A New Pentecost? Darton, Longman and Todd. 1975. p.109.

and that which they have taken on in the current Charismatic Movement: in the past they have been associated with extraordinary people or places, whereas in the Charismatic Movement they have appeared as ordinary endowments of the local community<sup>14</sup>. However, in spite of the fact that Catholicism has always acknowledged the charisms, it has had surprisingly little to say about them. In a later publication, O'Connor writes of Pope Paul:

"Pope Paul has very little to say about the charisms of 1 Cor.ch.12, that is, tongues, prophecy, interpretation and the like. The only one of the charisms about which he seems to have much to say is discernment and he treats that, not so much as a charism, but as a function of bishops and spiritual directors in discriminating among the inspirations received by those entrusted to their care ... Conversely, like many authors today, he frequently uses the terms 'charism' or 'charismatic' without any special reference to the 'manifestations of the Spirit' cited in 1 Cor ... his references to the charisms are very brief and general.

"The chief reason for this seems to be the fact that the Church has had relatively little experience with the charisms since the early centuries ... (although Catholicism has always acknowledged them, and has assigned them a place on the theory of grace)." <sup>15</sup>

This comment is accurate when applied to Catholicism as a whole, for in spite of acceptance of the charismatic throughout church tradition, the charismatics have been virtually presented with a vacuum as far as clear doctrine on the charismatic gifts is concerned. This is why there is such

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14. Edward O'Connor: The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church. Ave Maria Press. 1971.

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15. Edward O'Connor: Pope Paul and the Spirit. Ave Maria Press. 1978. pp.71-72.

notable vagueness, and then diversity, when anything concrete is expressed.

In dealing with the question whether the charismatic gifts are intended to be operative in the Church today or whether all or some of them were purposely withdrawn by the Holy Spirit after a certain time had elapsed, Michael Harper examines three basic views that are frequently expressed about this matter. The first of these is that these gifts were intended for the early church alone and that those who claim to exercise them today are, however sincere, self-deceived. The second view is that the gifts are not permanently withdrawn, but are manifested at the sole discretion of the Holy Spirit, who may decide to withdraw them for one age and restore them for another. And the third view is that these gifts were intended ideally for the Church throughout all history, and will only be withdrawn at the return of Christ. Proponents of the latter view explain their absence throughout much of church history by a lack of faith and knowledge about them. Harper notes that the first view has lost much support in recent years, and he is undoubtedly correct in this observation. He states that this view is largely based on the premise that the gifts of the Spirit functioned as a kind of scaffolding for the establishment of the Church, and also that the gifts provided a temporary means of instruction before the New Testament had been written. When the work was completed, there was therefore no longer any need for them. Harper detects weaknesses in this argument. He points out that the Church will always need all the protection, support and help that God can give and that it will never be established until it is merged with the Church triumphant in heaven. He quotes an unnamed American layman, who commented perceptively that the issue is not whether glossolalia (as a gift of the Spirit) is authentic or not, but that the entire controversy centres round the fact that some authorities feel the Church has so matured as to be able to discard such manifestations of the Spirit. Harper feels that this shows that this view cannot be accepted and goes on to consider the second part of the argument. He states that much of the teaching eventually collected in the New Testament was being used in the Church in the period prior to its completion, and that with being so much closer to the earthly life of Christ, if anything they had more teaching then. He mentions Paul's quotation in Acts ch.20.v.35 of the words of Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than receive", which do not occur in the gospels. Harper feels that



if the gifts were necessary even in those days, they are still needed today. Furthermore, he finds no statement in the New Testament which indicates that Christ or the apostles regarded the gifts as temporary. Harper states that most scholars interpret "the perfect" of 1 Cor.ch.13.v.10 as the time when Christ returns: the gifts will be withdrawn at that point because they will no longer be necessary. A withdrawal of the gifts before then must logically include also the withdrawal of "knowledge", says Harper, and no theologian would be happy about that supposition.

With regard to the second view described by Harper, he says that the New Testament again would cast doubt upon it. In Mark ch.16.vv.17-20, there is no suggestion that the gifts would be limited to special periods and 1 Cor.ch.12.v.31 and ch.14.v.1 go further, for surely Christians are not to have an earnest desire which can never be satisfied because the gifts have been withdrawn by the Holy Spirit:

"If so, then it runs contrary to the whole of God's dealings with His people - for He never commands us to do anything which He will not enable us to fulfill."

Harper therefore concludes that the only view which accords with both the New Testament and church history is that these gifts were intended for the Church until the return of Christ, and were only withdrawn because of the faithlessness and ignorance of the Church<sup>16</sup>.

Some authors distinguish between gifts that were available for a temporary period in the early church and those which are permanently available, and this usually involves the separation of the 1 Cor.ch.12 list from the other New Testament lists, the very distinction which the Charismatic Movement has ceased to make. The arguments for the cessation of the charismata are basically concerned with these 'extraordinary' gifts, and so these authors are closer to the 'anti' position than to the position

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16. Michael Harper: As At The Beginning. Hodder and Stoughton. 1965. pp.106-111.

of the typical participant in the Charismatic Movement.

The legitimate, and indeed important place of the charismata in the experience of the Christian has been constantly emphasised in the Charismatic Movement. Tom Smail<sup>17</sup>, however, prefers to describe them in terms of event than experience. He feels that the word 'event' is preferable to 'experience' because of the latter's subjective connotations in a consideration of the distinctive field of the Spirit's operation. Moreover, the charismatic gifts provide a living witness to God's reality today and thereby have an "event-status" of their own. Michael Harper states that the five words used in 1 Cor.ch.12 to express five characteristics of the gifts each reveal a facet of their nature. The word πνευματικά (verse 1) is translated "spirituals" and shows that they are spiritual endowments to be distinguished from natural gifts, whilst χαρίσματα ("gifts", verses 4 and 9) shows that they are not rewards or wages, but are freely bestowed according to the sovereign will of the Holy Spirit. Paul implies by his use of the word <sup>δὲ</sup> <sup>κων</sup> <sup>ὄρα</sup> (verse 5), translated "services", that they are opportunities given for ministry to others, and ἐνεργήματα, "powers", (verse 6) indicates their essence. They are momentary powers rather than permanent endowments, bursts of spiritual "energy", which serve a useful purpose, and then disappear again:

"For example, a person is healed through the gift of healing. The gift has fulfilled its function, God is glorified and it disappears."

Many participants in the movement would challenge Harper over this point, particularly when it is applied to speaking in tongues. Tongue-speakers frequently say that they are able to employ this gift whenever and wherever they wish to and that the gift is always 'there': this implies that it is a permanent endowment. Finally, says Harper, the word φανερώματα (verse 7), manifestations, indicates that the gifts are not like the fruit of the Spirit, invisible graces, but rather visible acts which are seen, or heard,

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17. Tom Smail: "In Tune With The Trinity: Part 1". Theological Renewal. No.4. Oct/Nov 1976. p.4.

or felt. Every gift of the Spirit should thus be a visible and tangible manifestation of the glory of God. Harper then provides the following definition of the gifts in a concise summary:

"... certain powers (energmata) given to men by the Holy Spirit supernaturally (pneumatika) and freely (charismata), to be manifested (thanerosa) in ministry (diakoniai) to others for their edification."<sup>18</sup>

Seven years later, a similar definition of the charismatic gifts appears in a Renewal Study Section, but with notable amplifications:

"Spiritual gifts are certain powers (energmata) given to men by the Holy Spirit (pneumatika) and freely bestowed (charismata) and manifested (thanerosa) through our natural faculties (mind, mouth, hands, etc) in the service of others (diakonia) for their blessing and God's glory."<sup>19</sup> (my italics)

We can detect here two significant shifts in the understanding of the gifts, which are representative of a development common to most groups in the Charismatic Movement. Firstly, the gifts are portrayed in a less 'other-worldly' manner than before. The emphasis is upon their manifestation through natural faculties, and this effectively discourages the sensationalism which was typical of the movement in its earlier days. Furthermore, it helps to integrate the 'supernatural' and the 'natural' in a fusion that is now characteristic of the movement. Secondly, the emphasis upon the function of the gifts in directing attention to God may be interpreted as a redressing of the balance which in earlier days tended to swing towards a focus on Man, on the benefits conferred by the gifts, and on the spiritual power which one could expect to enjoy as a result of

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18. op.cit.5. pp.64-66.

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19. Michael Harper: "Renewal Study Section (Spiritual Gifts)". Renewal No. 57. June/July 1975.

receiving them. This is accompanied by a broader understanding of the operation of the gifts and of the term 'charismatic', as an article by Harold Parks in Renewal illustrates. He understands Christianity as being "altogether charismatic" in that the heart of God is altogether outgoing and outreaching in both judgment and mercy to Man. It is in the nature of God to move outward towards His universe and towards the heart of Man. Out of His "charismatic motivation", says Parks, God plans unceasingly and secretly to release yet more and more life into the created order and even more into His church, the redeemed order. As God of creation, He gives life to it (Acts ch.17.v.25) and as God of the Covenant, He bestows 'χαρισμα' on His church. The nature of God is therefore inseparable from the demonstration of love in the gifts that He gives<sup>20</sup>.

The Catholic Newsletter offers evidence of a very similar understanding of the term 'charismatic' when it states:

"All Christian life is charismatic since it is a share in the life of the Trinity. All prayer, whatever its style, is charismatic since it is the Spirit praying within us."<sup>21</sup>

And in 1976, Goodnews comments:

"There is no such thing as a non-charismatic Christian, although there are Christians who do not know they are charismatic."<sup>22</sup>

David Parry puts the whole topic in a nutshell when he states:

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20. Harold Parks: "Charisma: What's in a word?". Renewal No.52. Aug/Sept. 1974. p.22

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21. Newsletter. Approx. April 1973 (undated).

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22. Goodnews No.4. June 1976.

"Since the words 'charism' and its derivative 'charismatic' are so rich in meanings, and these meanings differ so widely, and are yet held together by a certain radical unity, it is not surprising that the present lively debate runs into the danger of some confusion."<sup>23</sup>

Attempts have frequently been made to categorise the charismatic gifts. John Noble of the Fullness Circle provides a clear definition of the gifts as he understands them, dividing them into three categories. The first of these contains the actual gifts of the Spirit (such as prophecy), then there are the ministry gifts (such as teaching), and finally the character gifts (for example, showing mercy). The first group is created in Christians by Jesus, the second is formed in them through experience and by the discipline of the ministries, and the third is given by the Spirit as He decides for the blessing, development and expansion of the Church. In 1 Cor.ch.12 and Rom.ch.12, states Noble, the ministries, supernatural gifts and natural gifts are thus mixed up together and collectively called 'charismata' or grace gifts<sup>24</sup>. Other people distinguish between 'enabling gifts' and 'serving gifts', and the more wide-ranging the definition of 'charismatic', the more diverse are the categories employed. When the designation 'charism' was chiefly confined to the list of 1 Cor.ch.12, the matter was more clear-cut, and these gifts were usually divided into gifts of inspiration (tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophecy), gifts of revelation (word of knowledge, word of wisdom, discerning of spirits), and gifts of power (faith, healing, miracles). But the widening of the 'charismatic range' rendered this inadequate. Traditional Catholic theology has approached the matter in a very different way, for when discussing the virtues and gifts of the Spirit it has often been primarily or only with reference to Isaiah ch.11.vv.2-3. Prior emphasis upon the gifts of 1 Cor.ch.12 only appeared with the birth of Charismatic Renewal.

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23. David Parry: Not Mad, Most Noble Festus. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1979. p.53.

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24. John Noble: First Apostles, Last Apostles. Private publication.

Some Catholic charismatics have questioned Catholicism's traditional usage of Isaiah ch.11.vv.2-3. Donald Gelpi, for example, points out that:

" ... the original text is not so much concerned with enumerating a complete list of spiritual gifts as it is with describing an ideal ruler whose possession of the divine breath in its fullness would transform him into a compendium of the Spirit-filled figures of the Old Testament." <sup>25</sup>

David Parry makes similar comments. He divides the gifts of the Spirit into two categories, those which are of benefit primarily to the individual and those which build up the community. Whilst recognising that the two cannot be separated entirely, he would classify in the first category such things as a new love and aptitude for prayer, a new discernment of spiritual things, the disappearance of old temptations, and release from deep psychological wounds. In the second category, that of the 'service gifts', is the list of 1 Cor.ch.12. Throughout the Charismatic Movement, different people develop their own classifications: these are usually very individualistic, and - particularly in the case of Catholics - often enveloped by a mystical vagueness.

The question frequently arises whether the charismatic gifts are purely supernatural, or else natural in the sense that similar abilities can be found in the non-Christian. Harper's definition of the gifts (above) implies that he would make a distinction, and this position is expressed clearly by Kenneth Kinghorn:

"Spiritual gifts differ from human talents. All persons have natural aptitudes and abilities, but only Christians can receive spiritual gifts. A human talent is, of course, a gift of God. But human talents can function independently of the Holy Spirit. In contrast to a talent, spiritual gifts cannot function apart from the special working of the Holy Spirit. Let's attempt a definition: a spiritual gift is a supernatural ability or

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25. op.cit.12.

capacity given by God to enable the Christian to minister and to serve." <sup>26</sup>

But once again, the broadening understanding of 'charism' has been influential, and many participants in the Charismatic Movement believe that any quality or ability is God-given and is just as much a charism as the more frequently acknowledged gifts which have an obviously supernatural element. David Watson provides a slightly different slant on this, apparently suggesting that a natural ability may pass through a transition stage and become a spiritual gift:

"If any gift or ability ... is used to glorify Christ and to edify his body, it becomes a gift of the Holy Spirit. Of course there must be some conscious dependence on God, together with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, before a natural ability becomes a true spiritual gift." <sup>27</sup>

The position of Catholic participants on this issue seems to be that a charism may have its foundations in a natural ability, but that the Holy Spirit has added something to it that marks it out as a true charism and lifts it beyond the normal human ability. The Newsletter of July 1974 states:

"A charism is ... a dimension of what we have and are ... it is a question of discovering them rather than of acquiring them. Gifts are primarily given for our role in the community, and therefore can be discovered by asking, 'what is my role in the community?'" <sup>28</sup> (their italics)

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26. Kenneth Cain Kinghorn: Gifts of the Spirit. Abingdon Press. 1976. p.22.

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27. David Watson: I Believe In The Church. Hodder and Stoughton. 1979. p.105.

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28. Newsletter. July 1974.

This may seem to imply that charisms are ordinary human abilities. However, given the Catholic belief that the Holy Spirit is received at infant baptism and that the charismatic gifts are present, if latent, from then on, this does not necessarily follow. A statement by Cardinal Suenens illustrates this train of thought:

"We should note at the outset that, in virtue of baptism, every Christian has received the Holy Spirit and thus, potentially, all the gifts of the Spirit. The visible manifestation of a gift, its active exercise, reveals its presence but it does not create the gift ... Further, we should remember that everything, in a sense, is a gift: 'everything is grace'." <sup>29</sup>

Peter Hocken writes that intrinsic to spiritual gifts is the capacity for development. They are not simply powers which people either have or do not have, but are capacities or endowments that may be partially or more fully developed. He brings out the tension experienced by charismatics who seek to hold together the natural basis of the charismata with the fact that they must have a supernatural quality also:

"The phrases 'extraordinary gifts' and 'supernatural gifts' are found in a few Roman Catholic authors and clearly arise from a concern to locate these charismata within a received theological framework. 'Extraordinary gifts' suggests that the decisive criteria are either rarity (extraordinary in occurrence) or visual impact (extraordinary as phenomena); not surprisingly this phrase has little appeal within the pentecostal movement, the whole thrust of which is to present these gifts as part of ordinary Christian life. 'Supernatural gifts' may suggest the lack of a natural basis for these activities and can imply that other New Testament gifts are not equally the work of grace.

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29. op.cit.13.



"Some authors deal with this label problem by varying their terminology and avoiding technical terms, thereby attaching less theological weight to the particular phrases used." 30

This accounts for the vagueness and inconsistency of much writing on this topic. Practical statements which can be clearly related to the usage of gifts in church life are regrettably few. Eric Fife is refreshing in this respect with his comment:

"There is undoubtedly a place where natural talents and spiritual gifts overlap, but sorry indeed is the man who relies on natural talent to do the Lord's work." 31

So too is William McRae with his illustration of the distinction under consideration:

"I have had unbelieving professors who have a great talent for teaching. But there is also the spiritual gift of teaching." 32  
(his italics)

There is comparatively little direct emphasis upon the fruit of the Spirit when one considers the wealth of material produced within the Charismatic Movement concerning the gifts of the Spirit. However, Kurt Koch has stated:

"Any evaluation of the gifts of the Spirit necessarily involves

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30. Peter Hocken in Hocken et al: New Heaven? New Earth?. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1976. pp.20-23.

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31. Eric Fife: The Holy Spirit: The Bible and Common Sense. Kingsway. 1980. p.116.

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32. William McRae: The Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts. Zondervan. 1976. p.21.

the question of the fruits of the Spirit. One might even venture to say that the fruit of the Spirit are more important for our faith than the gifts of the Spirit. We achieve more through what we are than through what we do. Our attitude speaks louder than our actions." 33

And the American Charles Hummel writes in his critique of the contemporary Charismatic Movement:

"The fruit of the Spirit is for all times and places, while spiritual gifts are for specific times and needs." 34

But which gifts are for which individual? Should one seek specific gifts? In the earlier days of the movement when speaking in tongues was regarded as the evidence of the baptism in the Spirit, as in Classical Pentecostalism, participants were particularly urged to seek this gift. Some house churches in particular retain this emphasis, but the Charismatic Movement as a whole has shifted away from it. The initiative of the Holy Spirit in bestowing gifts upon individuals as He chooses is stressed, and the widening of the range of the charismata, notably in Catholic circles, has encouraged people to regard themselves as already gifted, rather than needing to seek specific gifts. Harper emphasises, however, that gifts are momentary manifestations. One person may well manifest one gift more than the other gifts and so can be said to 'have the gift', but there must be a constant alertness and readiness to manifest any of the gifts as prompted by the Holy Spirit. Harper prefers the term 'ministry' to 'having the gift', as this provides the correct emphasis that it is the needy person who really receives 'the gift'. Christians should both seek all the gifts and be content with those which have been given to them, says Harper. This advice sounds convincing in theory, but is surely more difficult to put

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33. op.cit.4. p.60.

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34. Charles Hummel: Fire In The Fireplace: Contemporary Charismatic Renewal. IVCF. 1978.

into practice, for it is a contradiction in terms. His emphasis is very much upon a specific seeking after the gifts and contrary to what some imply, he points out that they will not just "drop into the lap"<sup>35</sup>. He seeks to provide practical advice concerning how to recognise the prompting of the Holy Spirit to exercise a gift. He calls the prompting an 'anointing', and describes it as a kind of pressure which may come in various ways but does not come from the person concerned. It is never compulsive or forceful, and this factor is one which distinguishes Christian gifts from spiritist and occult gifts, where a compelling spirit is involved. In the case of the Christian:

"There is often a feeling of discomfort until the gift is manifested. It is impossible to describe what is bound to be very subjective, but it will be made clear to us at the time, and we learn gradually from experience when this is."<sup>36</sup>

It appears to be unanimously agreed that only Christians can receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit: only people who are reborn spiritually can receive the Spirit and have His gifts develop within them. The implications of a broad interpretation of 'charism', however, do not concur with this, for if every natural ability is understood as in itself a charism, then it can hardly be denied that non-Christians possess them. The inconsistency here needs to be given further thought by charismatics. Another implication of characteristic charismatic doctrine is that charismatics are superior Christians and have an added endowment which those who have not known a charismatic experience do not possess. The accusation is a frequent one that the Charismatic Movement has followed Classical Pentecostalism in promoting a first-class and a second-class Christian divide, and charismatics have repeatedly attempted to refute it. David Hughes provides a typical example of the charismatics' response. He states that the charismatic gifts do not make people first-class

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35. Michael Harper: None Can Guess. Hodder and Stoughton. 1971. p.52.

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36. op.cit.5. pp.71-80.

Christians, but better equipped ones, noting that they are to do with power for service, not character<sup>37</sup>. But this delicate distinction is insufficient to refute the allegation and until the charismatics are able to deal with it more convincingly, the latter must be allowed to stand.

Whereas the charismatic gifts received great emphasis in the earlier years of the movement, they are now treated in a more balanced and less sensational manner. A non-participating author has recently commented:

"Today's Charismatics run a course perilously close to the church at Corinth, where spiritual gifts were counterfeited and practices of pagan ecstasies ran amuck."<sup>38</sup>

This is a misrepresentation of the current situation, where leaders constantly urge that caution and care be exercised with respect to the practice of charismatic gifts. The decreased emphasis upon the gifts of the Spirit has been interpreted by some as evidence of a decline in the manifestation of the gifts, and there does seem to be some evidence of a decline in their manifestation in Catholic circles. Ian Petit voiced his concern about this in 1976 and 1977:

"I sometimes wonder if the (prayer) group is just coming together because it likes to be together, and there is a danger of it being a cosy circle of friends ... At the risk of being accused of being 'gift-centred', I am surprised at the number of prayer groups I've attended where I have not witnessed the gifts, and on questioning about the subject I have found it is rare for them to be manifested."<sup>39</sup>

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37. David Hughes: "God's love gifts". Renewal No.34. Sept.1971. p.19.

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38. John F. MacArthur: The Charismatics: A Doctrinal Perspective. Zondervan. 1978. pp.199-200

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39. Ian Petit: Goodnews No.2. Jan. 1976.

" ... We must not leave behind the charismatic stage when we broaden our horizons. These gifts are for an ongoing use. There could be a temptation to make ourselves respectable by giving the impression we have gone through the charismatic stage. It is true the charisms are not the all important things, but they still remain important. All this was brought to my notice by someone who recently attended one of our conferences and he said to me, 'What really was so different about the talks? They really could have been given at any Christian conference.' Another question we could ask ourselves is whether our group exercise the gifts in any way, or do we ourselves ever exercise them?"<sup>40</sup>

However, this does not appear to be the case in most Protestant circles. If there is less mention of charismatic gifts, it is usually simply because people are used to them. Charismatic experience and practice are taken as very much matter-of-course and are integrated almost unobtrusively into the life of the Church or fellowship. Whereas in the nineteen-sixties and early seventies, people tended to be very much aware of the nature of somebody else's charismatic experience, this is no longer the case. Asked whether other people in a fellowship have known some personal charismatic experience, a common response now is:

"I'd never actually sat down and thought about whether people had or hadn't."<sup>41</sup>

Some charismatics have given the impression that the operation of the gifts in all churches would have a revolutionary effect upon church life in Britain. Although not agreeing that this would necessarily be so, Michael Harper does regard the reappearance of the charismatic gifts as very

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40. Ian Petit: Goodnews No.11. Aug/Sept. 1977.

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41. This, or a similar comment, has repeatedly been made in interviews with participants in the Charismatic Movement, and notably in the house churches.

significant:

"The return of the charismata in our generation, on a scale never before experienced, is one of the most important factors in the contemporary Church situation. We ignore it at our peril. For it means that weapons are being re-discovered which, put to their proper use, could swing the pendulum strongly in the right direction and be the means of drawing millions back to God." <sup>42</sup>

He longs to see the charismatic gifts integrated into the life of the church:

"In earlier ages they (bishops) often had healing gifts. What if episcopal visitations to parishes were accompanied with 'signs following'? What if confirmations and ordinations were the occasion for evangelistic preaching and teaching with a personal ministry to those wanting to commit their lives to Christ? What if afterwards bishops were to lay hands on the sick for their healing?" <sup>43</sup>

However, he does not present the charismata as the solution to every problem, and he states that a restoration of the gifts is not exclusively what God desires. It is but a part of the renewal that God intends for his Church, and there is much else to be restored:

"We should be open to the Holy Spirit renewing the whole life of the church, and that includes a lot more than spiritual gifts." <sup>44</sup>

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42. Michael Harper: Spiritual Warfare. Hodder and Stoughton. 1970. p.78.

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43. Michael Harper: Bishop's Move. Hodder and Stoughton. 1978. p.24.

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44. Michael Harper: Glory In The Church. Hodder and Stoughton. 1974. p.19.

This observation shows a maturity and balance which is commendable. The Fountain Trust has been notable for the manner in which it has sought to introduce charismatic renewal into the churches. The stress has been upon encouraging people to pursue renewal rather than imposing it upon them. An article in an early issue of Renewal by an Anglican minister underlined this:

"It needs to be taught clearly that the manifestation of the Holy Spirit cannot be imposed upon any church, but can only be imparted by the costly process of love." <sup>45</sup> (his italics)

Nevertheless, the gifts of the Holy Spirit have played a direct part in the renewal of individuals and churches. Peter Hocken writes:

"This restoration of charismatic pneumatika as part of normal Church life can be understood theologically as the restoration in Christian community of levels and capacities of the human spirit that have long lain dormant in Christian life. The unfamiliarity of these pneumatic activities reveals to Western Christians the extent to which their religion has become a cerebral affair, engaging the mind more than the heart." <sup>46</sup>

#### B. THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT LISTED IN 1 CORINTHIANS CH.12

Whilst there are many different enumerations of gifts mentioned in the New Testament and the opinion has become commonplace that the Bible does not contain an exhaustive list, the gifts of 1 Corinthians ch.12 have been particularly prominent in the Charismatic Movement. They have also been

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45. 'An Anglican minister': "Stumbling in the Spirit". Renewal No.9. June/July 1967. pp.18-21.

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46. op.cit.30. pp.22-23.

the ones which have given rise to the controversies which have featured in various responses to the movement, and for these reasons they are dealt with individually in this thesis.

### C The Word of Wisdom

This gift is presented as the ability given by the Holy Spirit to impart spiritual truth in a specific situation and in an 'anointed' way. The situation in question may often be a difficult or dangerous one where the aid of the Holy Spirit is particularly needed. Whilst Protestant theology has tended to equate the gift of wisdom with the ministries of preaching and teaching, Catholic theology has had little to say about it other than to place it within the context of the teaching authority of the Church. There has thus been little teaching concerning the gift in either tradition. Confusion has sometimes arisen concerning the difference between prophecy and the word of wisdom, as the Ranaghans acknowledge:

"We got in the habit of praying during such meetings for a 'prophecy' from the Lord for direction. When it came, we knew it. But what we now begin to see, is that when it came it was the 'word of wisdom'." <sup>47</sup>

What the difference actually is between these two gifts does, however, remain unclear.

It is emphasised that this gift is not the same as the ordinary human attribute of wisdom or shrewdness. The question then arises how one is to distinguish between the spiritual gift and the human ability. Michael Harper finds the best examples of the operation of the gift in the inspired way in which Jesús answered his hecklers (for example, over the issue of paying taxes to Caesar), and he gives an instance of the operation of the gift in the present Charismatic Movement. This is concerned with the words

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47. Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan: Catholic Pentecostals. Paulist Press. 1969.



used by a minister to calm a church member when there was the danger of division in his church over the charismatic issue<sup>48</sup>. Harper seems to assume that because the minister's words provided the perfect answer in that situation, it can be inferred that this was a manifestation of the word of wisdom. There is no clear distinction between charismatic ability and non-charismatic human ability, other than in relation to the effect of the words spoken upon the hearer. The subjectivity of this judgment does not necessarily invalidate the basis upon which it is made, even though it makes the reliability of the judgment more difficult. An additional distinction is sometimes drawn between spiritual wisdom and the gift of wisdom: a Christian may have the former but not necessarily receive the latter. Again the differentiation between them is left to the judgment of other Christians present.

D. Eddison describes the gift of wisdom as:

"... essentially understanding ... I may know a secret but I need also to understand its meaning and what is the best way to pass on its meaning."

The wisdom that is imparted may be about God or about other people. In the former case it may involve the shedding of more light on the contents of Scripture, not in the sense of new truth but in that of deeper understanding. This may be passed on by writing or speaking. In the latter case, Eddison refers to 1 Kg.ch.3, Mt.ch.22, and Acts ch.27.v.24, and says:

"... It must be the truth, but the truth in love."<sup>49</sup>

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48. Michael Harper: Spiritual Warfare. Hodder and Stoughton. 1970. pp.79-80.

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49. D. Eddison: "The Perceptive Gifts". Renewal No.35. Oct/Nov.1971. pp.9-12.

The Catholic writer, David Parry concurs with Eddison when he states that the gift of wisdom involves the power of penetration into doctrine and consequent capacity to explain it in depth. This phraseology is particularly effective in communicating the powerful thrust which accompanies the operation of this gift. It may be manifest in a wide range of situations, and particular mention has been made by Catholics of the operation of the gift in the sacrament of penance. In a booklet circulated by the National Service Committee, the American priest, Michael Scanlan bears witness to this:

"The priest can expect gifts of revelation yielding explicit insights. This is the author's experience confirmed by other confessors and laymen ...

"The priest should not rely solely on himself or his training to identify and confirm. St. Paul explicitly speaks of the gift to distinguish between spirits as well as the utterances of wisdom and knowledge (1 Cor.ch.12). Priests should seek these gifts through prayer ... " 50

#### D Word of Knowledge

The manifestation of this gift consists of the imparting of knowledge which has not been gained by normal conceptual means. This may be about either the natural or supernatural sphere, and may be a clearcut fact or concern a particular situation or context. The word of knowledge has often been viewed as a function of prophecy, concerned with the fore-telling of events, but its scope is somewhat wider than this. D. Eddison describes three areas in which this gift operates. Firstly, secrets about God may be imparted, and these are drawn from the Bible under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, there may be secrets about others, and here the

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50. Michael Scanlan: The Power In Penance. Confession and the Holy Spirit. Ava Maria Press. 1972. pp.31,41.

writer describes the common situation in which a member of a congregation feels that the minister is speaking directly to him and his situation. This is probably the result of a word of knowledge which is given to the minister. And thirdly, the Holy Spirit may bring knowledge of secrets about events, this being a particular asset in spiritual counselling<sup>51</sup>.

Michael Harper detects the gift of knowledge in operation throughout Jesus's ministry, citing as examples His knowledge concerning the woman at the well at Sychar, and the case of Nathaniel under the fig tree. He believes that this gift is of particular use when trying to help people who have had damaging experiences in early childhood, which they cannot themselves remember, but which they have repressed. He describes the case of a woman who was being prayed for and who had deep needs which affected her physically as well as spiritually. One of those who was present, and who hardly knew her, described a toy pet, and immediately memories came back to her of a serious deprivation of a much-loved toy when she was a small girl:

"Healing followed the release of this amongst other memories during prayer and the laying on of hands."

He describes another instance, concerning a young man at a conference:

"In a time of prayer someone shared a vision, which exactly described some of this man's past life, and revealed the basis of fears which had hindered his spiritual development, and prevented him from witnessing freely. Later that evening the fear was dealt with and a new release experienced."<sup>52</sup>

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51. op.cit.49.

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52. op.cit.42.

Many charismatics emphasise that the gift of a word of knowledge is to be found particularly in the ministries of those in leadership, and specifically in the teaching ministry. Some writers believe that the gift was a foundational one, present in the early church whilst doctrinal foundations were being laid, and that it was no longer necessary once the New Testament was available. They will thus not accept that this gift is operational today<sup>53</sup>. But the majority greatly value this gift and highly esteem its place in the Church's ministry. It must be said, however, that there is little consideration of the possibility of acquiring 'knowledge' by means other than that of the charismatic gift. There is the unsubstantiated assumption that the acquisition of some knowledge which could not have been gained by natural means is a manifestation of this charismatic gift. In the light of modern discussion of paranormal and psychic abilities, such as Extra Sensory Perception, a more thorough discussion would have been illuminating. The possibility must remain open that a person might have natural, although so far unexplained, abilities in this area.

The gifts of wisdom and of knowledge are closely related in the understanding of the majority of participants in the Charismatic Movement. Harper describes them as working together to provide the means of conveying to a Christian inspired understanding of situations and of people's needs, and he feels that the two are of particular relevance in the sphere of spiritual warfare<sup>54</sup>. D. Eddison provides a succinct description of the inter-relationship between them when he writes:

"The word of knowledge is fact revealed maybe needing ... a 'word of wisdom' to make it a fact explained." <sup>55</sup>

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53. See for example, William McRae: op.cit.32. p.66.

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54. op.cit.48.

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55. op.cit.49.

The gift of wisdom therefore compliments the gift of knowledge by taking it a step further and revealing its application. These gifts are presented as being of importance in the provision of divine guidance, and their role in the teaching and pastoral ministry of the Church is felt to be a strategic one by charismatics.

## E Faith

D. Hughes writes:

"The gift of faith is the faith that moves mountains. It is a gift of divine grace given to individuals at specific times and always that God's glory may be revealed in a situation." <sup>56</sup>

This gift is distinct both from the faith with which a Christian trusts in his salvation - and which every Christian by definition has - and the faith which is one of the fruits of the Spirit listed in Gal.ch.5.v.22, which every Christian should produce. Rather it is the 'mountain-moving faith' of Mt.ch.17.v.20 and 1 Cor.ch.13.v.2, a faith which has definite results and which proves itself in these results. It involves a firm belief that God will act in doing what is being requested or prayed for, and David Parry provides a helpful summary as follows:

"The faith referred to is that which suddenly asserts itself at a given moment, knowing that God will answer our prayer; the answer will not necessarily be what we technically call a miracle, but those concerned will recognise it as the answer given by God." <sup>57</sup>

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56. D. Hughes: "The Gifts of Power". Renewal No.37. Feb/Mar.1972. pp.28-29.

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57. David Parry: This Promise Is For You. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1977. pp.68-69.

This gift will be a means of blessing to others, and is often manifested at times of crisis, danger or persecution, and indeed at times when a situation would normally leave one in despair and indecision concerning how best to minister. Mention is frequently made of this gift in connection with the ministry of healing, and Francis MacNutt has experienced the gift within this context:

"As I understand it, the 'gift of faith' is a ministry-gift which God imparts to help us pray with confidence and 'no hesitation in our hearts' for a given intention. Since the confidence can come only by God's revealing his will at a given moment, the gift of 'the word of knowledge' is closely connected with the 'gift of faith'." 58

This explanation is both clear and practical, and conveys a clear impression of the kind of situation in which this gift operates. There has been a constant emphasis in the Charismatic Movement upon the exercise of expectant and appropriating faith in prayer, and the gift of faith is exercised very much as a matter of course in the day-to-day situations in which ministry is required. The fact that relatively little has been written about it is evidence of this, and shows how it has been absorbed as an integral aspect of the ministry of a charismatic church or fellowship.

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58. Francis MacNutt: Healing. Ava Maria Press. 1974. p.126.

Chapter 7.THE CHARISMATIC GIFTS: PART 2A. Healing

The phenomenon of healing has been a much-publicized aspect of the Charismatic Movement and one which has aroused the interest and hope of many people, Christian and non-Christian alike, 'Healing meetings' have been held throughout Britain, and widespread manifestations of the gift of healing have been claimed. In America, numerous itinerant charismatic healers have travelled the country, becoming extremely well-known and much sought after for their services, but this phenomenon has been more muted in Britain. Those involved in a healing ministry here have, to their credit, generally avoided the sensationalist 'show-biz' image which has characterised many of their American counterparts such as Kathryn Kuhlman<sup>1</sup>.

As thought has developed concerning the gift of healing, a notable contribution has been made by the American priest, Francis MacNutt. His books Healing<sup>2</sup> and The Power To Heal<sup>3</sup> have been recommended reading for both Protestant and Catholic participants in the Charismatic Movement, and have been extremely influential<sup>4</sup>. People's interest and involvement in the

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1. Kathryn Kuhlman died in February 1976. Her biography Daughter of Destiny by Jamie Buckingham (Logos. 1976) provides a revealing portrait of the human person behind the glittering facade.

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2. Francis MacNutt: Healing. Ava Maria Press. 1974.

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3. Francis MacNutt: The Power To Heal. Ava Maria Press. 1977.

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4. MacNutt shocked the Catholic Church by marrying in 1980. Tom Forrest of the International Communication Office commented as follows upon the priest's entry into a 'canonically invalid marriage': "... we share a common sadness as we face the reality that Fr. MacNutt's present situation necessarily distances him and his ministry from the Charismatic Renewal within the Catholic Church ... " Goodnews No.27. April/May 1980. Protestants, however, felt none of these qualms, and continue to refer to MacNutt.

ministry of healing have come about for two main reasons. For many, their baptism in the Spirit experience has brought spontaneous emotional, mental or physical healing, and it has become natural for them to pray with confidence for healing of infirmities in themselves and other people. For others, their involvement has arisen from an intense anxiety at the suffering of others coupled with a fresh realization of the love and power of God and His concern with day-to-day situations and problems. Francis MacNutt's involvement seems to have stemmed from the latter, and he describes his response when faced with the suffering of those under his ministry:

"I couldn't honestly say to myself - or to them - that all this destructive suffering was redemptive ... that (it) was God's will and was a cross specially chosen by God. Clearly there was a mystery involved in this, but it was the mystery of evil, or original sin; I couldn't believe that it was the mystery of God's direct will for man." <sup>5</sup>

Whereas healing had been a dominant factor in the ministries of Jesus and the early church, by this century it had largely disappeared from Christianity<sup>6</sup>. Its demise is symbolized by the transformation of Catholicism's rite of the anointing of the sick into a sacrament for the dying, intended to prepare the soul for death. This aberration has now, however, been reversed, and the sacrament is once more regarded as a rite of healing for all kinds of illnesses. Rene Laurentin has listed several operative influences which he feels explain the resurgence of the gift of healing. These are: experience; the cultural milieu; a return to Scriptural sources; a tradition which he claims has been constant in the Church; the need of mankind; and the challenge of Vatican I, which noted the importance of the external signs of revelation, especially miracles and

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5. op.cit.2. p.11.

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6. Morton Kelsey has provided a detailed survey of the Church's attitude to healing down through the centuries: Healing and Christianity. SCM Press. 1973.



prophecies<sup>7</sup>. Certainly it is easier for a Catholic initially to understand the concept of healing than for most Protestants, since Catholicism contains a tradition of saints gifted with healing powers. Nevertheless, the Christian attitude to sickness and suffering has tended to be one of ascetic endurance, consisting of a theology which encourages the person involved to 'bear his cross gladly'. MacNutt comments succinctly that the modern Christian attitude concerning healing is shaped more by pagan thought than by Christianity, and that most sermons on sickness and suffering reflect more the influences of Roman stoicism than the doctrine of Jesus<sup>8</sup>. And Morton Kelsey notes perceptively that:

"It is well and good to talk of the brave, patient souls who have developed through suffering, but the fine border-line at which disease ceases to be a destructive force and becomes a blessing is very hard to see. Perhaps God can turn evil to good, but this does not change the fact that many are simply destroyed by illness."<sup>9</sup>

The Charismatic Movement has challenged the theology which implies the redemptive suffering of Man and present acceptance of the cross of suffering as the only answer. The assertion that God normally desires the healing of sickness does not in itself result in a Christianity without a cross, and MacNutt formulates the following distinction:

"I speak of the kind of Christianity preached by Christ himself and his apostles - where suffering is seen as an evil - an evil to be overcome when it appears to overwhelm and destroy the inner

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7. Rene Laurentin: Catholic Pentecostalism. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1977. p.116.

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8. op.cit.2. p.62.

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9. op.cit.6.

life of a man; on the other hand it is to be endured and rejoiced in when it comes from the persecution of evil men or from the fatigue of apostolic labours. Although good can result from it, suffering is in itself the result of sin; it is only to be endured for the sake of the kingdom, not for its own sake." <sup>10</sup>

The Charismatic Movement's attitude to sickness is thus an optimistic one, and it is confidently expected that God will answer prayers for healing, and glorify Himself by this means. Most churches and groups influenced by the Charismatic Movement seem to have had experience of people being healed. One group has seen healing of diabetes, back injury, spinal damage, and many less serious illnesses, whilst another mentioned the healing of a cancer which had been diagnosed as terminal<sup>11</sup>. Magazines and newsletters contain numerous accounts of healings, and a recent example in Renewal describes God's healing of a deaf and brain damaged baby<sup>12</sup>. Many groups begin by experiencing the healing of relatively minor ailments and, presumably as their faith and expectancy grow, progress to the healing of more serious conditions. The Newsletter and Goodnews illustrate this with regard to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. In July 1973, a reader's letter reported the healing of a corn<sup>13</sup>. Then in January 1976 noticeably more testimonies to healing were appearing<sup>14</sup> with claims of the healing of

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10. op.cit.2. pp.81-82.

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11. Interviews with members of a house church, July 1980, and a member of a Baptist church, January 1982.

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12. Jenny Cooke: "Love Is The Way". Renewal No.94. Aug/Sept.1981. pp.16-18.

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13. Newsletter. July 1973.

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14. Goodnews No.2. Jan.1976.

leukemia and wheelchair confinements. By early 1979, healing services were taking place all over Britain, and restored eyesight and hearing, relief from migraine and various types of rheumatic illnesses, and inner healing were all mentioned<sup>15</sup>. Whilst the Charismatic Movement has tended to over-estimate and exaggerate many of its healings, it cannot be denied that a definite phenomenon has frequently occurred.

It is noted that in the New Testament several words are used to denote both spiritual and physical healing. The concept of wholeness and maturity involves the body as well as the Spirit, and healing is seen as one of several integral factors involved in Christian growth<sup>16</sup>. Morris Maddocks believes that healing will come about by the following means: the sacraments of healing (unction, the laying on of hands, and "our Lord's own sacrament of healing, the eucharist"), conversion, baptism, confirmation, absolution, the work of preaching and prophecy, teaching and spiritual direction, and the direct activity of the Spirit in prayer or tongues<sup>17</sup>. This makes healing a natural consequence of a relationship with God. As regards the actual methods and procedure of healing, Ian Cockburn lists several as having biblical foundation. This is done not in order to attempt to reduce divine healing to a series of techniques, but to distinguish some of the different ways in which God heals the sick and which are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but may operate together. Healing may be received simply through a person praying for himself, or the intercession of others on his behalf, or the agreement of two or three, according to the words of Mt.ch.18.vv.18-20. Anointing with oil, participating in the Lord's supper (1 Cor.ch.11.vv.29-30), and the laying

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15. Goodnews No.20. Feb/March 1979.

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16. Renewal Study Section ("Christian Growth"). Renewal No.63. June/July 1976.

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17. Morris Maddocks: "Prayer and Healing". Renewal No.69. June/July 1977. p.25.

on of hands are further methods, as is faith in the Lord and His Word, either vicarious faith or personal. The word of authority spoken in faith can be distinguished from prayer, and there are also distinct occasions (Lk.ch.5.v.17) when the power of the personal presence of Jesus is such that sick people are spontaneously healed by Him. This is without any preaching or teaching of the word of God, the laying on of hands, anointing with oil or prayer, for there is no human intermediary. Healing has also been known today through handkerchiefs or cloths which a Christian with the ministry of healing has prayed over. Biblical reference to this is found in Acts ch.19.vv.11-12, and is understood as a manifestation of the working of miracles of 1 Cor.ch.12.v.10:

"The sick person places the blessed cloth upon their body, as would be the hands of the minister if such were present. This is one way in which a sick person who is too far away to be in reach of direct personal ministry can receive healing."

This is described as 'an extraordinary miracle', but is listed along with the other means or methods of healing<sup>18</sup>. Most writers emphasise that Jesus's Gospel was for the whole man and that salvation necessarily involves health for the whole person. In this sense, then, healing is 'natural'. Heribert Muhlen's comments are of significance here:

"Nature heals itself. This possibility of spontaneous cures rooted in creation itself, is the basis of charismatic healing. The latter is not essentially supernatural, but only in the way it takes place. In it healing forces lying within creation itself are mobilised, creation is restored to its pristine state and its own possibilities exploited. Christ did not abolish sickness and death, but he deprived them of their anti-divine character. If then someone gives himself back to God totally, in a deep, basic trust, this has effects even in his bodily nature."<sup>19</sup>  
 (his italics)

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18. Ian Cockburn: "Divine Healing: Its Biblical Foundations (Part 3)". Renewal No.39. June/July 1972. pp.27-31.

The occurrence of healing glorifies God and manifests His presence and power. Allied with God's concern for the whole person, this provides a definite purpose behind the divine healing power. Indeed, healing is presented as part of a wider ministry, and this is an emphasis which has been present from the earliest days, not one which has developed with time. In 1968, Renewal stated:

"The message of divine healing should be directed to every part of life, not just the physical. The total claims of Christ should be presented." <sup>20</sup>

More recently, Trevor Martin has stated that God intended his healing gift to man to have a wider application than the other charismatic gifts. Healing is unique amongst the charismata because it ranges into areas of Gospel truth and practice unknown to its counterparts. It is a primary expression of the Kingdom's <sup>δουραμια</sup> or the Spirit's supernatural power, and repentance and healing go hand in hand. Charismatic healing expresses the beautiful  $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta$  of God, and healing and preaching are also connected. Here Martin comments:

"The audio aspect of the Gospel is perfectly united with its visual dimension."

Engagement in healing ministry is engagement in an act of creativity with God:

"For when the ministrant speaks the creative word of the Lord: 'in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, be healed', then something is bound to happen." (his italics)

Healing and ruling with Christ stand together, and the Church is called to

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19. Heribert Muhlen: A Charismatic Theology. Burns and Oates. 1978.p.163.

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20. Editorial ("healing too"): Renewal No.16. Aug/Sept.1968. p.3.

carry on the ministry of Jesus with respect to this. The writer then notes that the most distinctive difference between the gift of healing and the other charismatic gifts is seen in the unique connection which healing has with the finished work of Christ. The gift of healing is related to one of the two basic benefits that Christ's Passion affords to man - forgiveness for sin and healing for sickness - and this gives it a more far-reaching application<sup>21</sup>. One wonders whether in their rediscovery of Jesus's healing ministry, the charismatics have not elevated this aspect too much, and ascribed to it a dominance which is out of proportion to that ascribed to it in Scripture.

The emphasis in the British Charismatic Movement is very much upon a healing ministry incorporated into the Church rather than upon independent, itinerant 'healers'. Rene Laurentin notes that the gift of healing should be an ordinary, normal part of the life of every Christian community, and that the emphasis must not be on an individual 'healer', but on the community, in subordination to God, as the source of all healing. He comments that in the case of Kathryn Kuhlman, many people who attended her healing services believed more in her than in God, however pure her own intentions may have been:

"If this individualistic style were to prevail, it would give rise to serious abuses in more than ninety per cent of the cases."<sup>22</sup>

This concern over individualistic healing ministries, and Kathryn Kuhlman's in particular, is common to many groups in the Charismatic Movement. Furthermore, placed within its context in the local church, the healing ministry can play an important part in evangelization. In the early church, healing was often a means of bringing people to faith in Jesus

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21. Trevor Martin: "The whole ministry of healing". Renewal No.95. Oct/Nov.1981. pp.22-23.

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22. op.cit.7. See pp.119-122, 131.

Christ, and MacNutt comments that if the risen Christ is still healing the sick, then there is no problem in making Christianity relevant to the needs of most people today<sup>23</sup>. Michael Harper echoes this when he asks:

"How can we neglect, as some do, this important ministry, when it has such enormous potential in communicating with the unbelieving world around us?"<sup>24</sup>

Catholics recognise a particularly close integration of healing with the Church due to the significant part played by their sacraments. Because these sacraments are specifically chosen channels of God's power, they are channels of healing. The Anointing of the Sick, Penance<sup>25</sup> and the Eucharist are all concerned with healing, and it has also been experienced in its broader aspects in connection with the others.

Certain conditions are generally expected before healing will take place. Ian Cockburn lists these as repentance, faith, hope, assurance, and committal, and states that continued health is related to continuing obedience<sup>26</sup>. It is easy to see how a Christian will fulfill these conditions, but it raises the question why many non-Christians are also apparently healed. Charismatics frequently reply that healing can initiate repentance and so often precedes Christian commitment. However, it is apparent that Christian commitment does not always result in some cases, and it may be necessary to acknowledge that God's purposes may often be

23. op.cit.2. p.22.

24. Michael Harper: Walk In The Spirit. Hodder and Stoughton. 1968.p.55.

25. See Michael Scanlan: The Power In Penance. National Service Committee. 1972.

26. Ian Cockburn: "Divine Healing. Its Biblical Foundations (Part 4)". Renewal No.41. Oct/Nov.1972. pp.19-23.

mysterious and known only to Him. Perhaps in the context of this issue it would be appropriate for a study to be undertaken concerning the possibility of auto-suggestion and 'mind-over-matter' mechanisms playing a part in apparent divine healing.

The attitude within the Charismatic Movement towards medicine is a very positive one, and Neo-Pentecostals do not reject modern medicine as Classical Pentecostals tended to do<sup>27</sup>. All healing is understood as divine in the sense that where men co-operate with the natural laws of God, healing will be promoted and will take place even when those ministering are not Christians. Medicine, surgery, physiotherapy, psychiatry and auto-suggestion are therefore all thoroughly endorsed, and it is acknowledged that although not always necessary, a diagnosis is always helpful and sometimes essential. In connection with this, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as the word of knowledge, may be necessary, especially where non-physical healing is needed. Healing may sometimes come about through the spiritual means of divine healing operating in conjunction with one of the means mentioned above. The sick are very rarely encouraged to cease taking medical treatment, although when healing does take place this will no longer be necessary.

It will already be apparent that frequent reference to 'non-physical' healing is found in the Charismatic Movement. This aspect of healing is commonly referred to as 'inner healing' or 'healing of the memories', and the Biblical basis for this type of healing is less clear. Nevertheless, Scriptural references are given for the healing of memories injured by fear (Heb.ch.2.v.14; 1 Jn.ch.4.v.18; Is.ch.54.v.14), parental deprivation (Mt.ch.7.v.11; Is.ch.49.v.16; Ps.27.v.10), pre-natal damage (Ps.139.vv.13-16), humiliation (Ps.22.v.24), long bereavement and hurt (Is.ch.54.vv.4-6), grief (Lk.ch.4.v.18; Is.ch.53.v.4), and depression (Is.ch.61.v.3; Is.ch.53.v.7)<sup>28</sup>. Although Christian initiation, comprising

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27. For representative statements on the role of modern medicine, see David Parry: This Promise Is For You. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1977. p.92 and op.cit.18.

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28. op.cit.16.



of water baptism and baptism in the Holy Spirit, is often accompanied by physical healing, it normally has little effect upon hidden areas of a person's life, the wounds, scars, traumas, emotional disturbances and bad memories which need healing by prayer and counselling. If these remain undealt with, they may seriously hinder growth in Christian maturity. This aspect of healing is increasingly stressed today in both Christian and non-Christian circles, and it is a natural development in the progress of charismatic thought about healing. Jeanne Harper comments with regard to this:

"... one is not surprised God is giving new understanding and the appropriate gifts of His Spirit both for healing in the area of the mind and for strengthening Christians to face the greater pressures of today."<sup>29</sup>

The Renewal series "Dr. Frank Lake replies" reflected this emphasis by dealing with readers' psychological and emotional problems. Dr. Lake's approach to and understanding of these problems was based upon his belief in the theory and techniques of primal therapy, widely employed by members of the Clinical Theology Association<sup>30</sup>. Lake advocated "a retrospective evangelization of the dark continent of a forgotten babyhood and childhood", believing that peoples' problems with themselves and their relationships, and their difficulties in accepting God's fatherhood and love can all be traced back to the individual's traumatic and catastrophic experiences before birth, at birth, and in early infancy. He proposes a theology of correlation between the experiences of pain and affliction and separation, anxiety of the baby at birth, and the experiences undergone by Jesus on the cross. Because modern medicine ensures the survival of the birth damaged, Lake believed that there is now a preponderance of a new

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29. Jeanne Harper: "Healing of the Mind". Renewal No.40. Aug/Sept. 1972. p.25.

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30. For a brief account by an individual who has been helped by this therapy, see Anointed With The Spirit. Mayhew/McCrimmon. 1978. p.11.

type of sufferer. Clinical theology provides the Christian answer to this, furnishing a theology for the pastoral care of a person in such trouble and anxiety, which also informs a 'clinical meeting' where actual cases and specific problems are under analysis and discussion with a view to treatment. Lake cited the works of W.D. Winnicot, Otto Rank, Nandor Fodor, Arthur Janov, and Stanislaw Grof as providing evidence to connect peri-natal injuries with personality disorders and neuroses, and he believed that the significance and effects of primal pain are not merely theory, but fact<sup>31</sup>.

There has been justifiably strong reaction over the psychological and theological presuppositions involved in primal therapy. David MacInnes felt that the theological analogy between the cross and the individual's experience of birth was misleading and should be used very tentatively, simply because it is pure theory. Moreover, he noted the danger of theological imbalance when some of Lake's statements were followed through to their logical conclusions, and questioned the viability of dogmatic assertions about early experiences and the value assumptions implied. He also raised the issue of what is really therapeutic to a person and what is not, feeling that a distinction should be made between therapeutic results and the theories built on them. Whilst J.N. Isbister would agree with Lake on much of what he said concerning the healing power of Christ generally, and the fact that Christ does want to redeem every aspect of each person, he stressed that it had by no means been proved that primal pain exists. Peter Hutchinson added to this by pointing out that it should be recognised that psychological theory is an "entirely self-authenticating system"<sup>32</sup>. Whilst it is untrue that all, or even a majority, of those who stress the need for inner healing accept the theory or practise the techniques of primal therapy, the controversy that has arisen over this

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31. Frank Lake: "The work of Christ in the healing of primal pain". Theological Renewal No.6. June/July 1977. pp.8-20.

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32. "The work of Christ in the healing of primal pain (responses)". Theological Renewal No.7. Oct/Nov. 1977. pp.11-18.

particular theory illustrates the dangers inherent in attempts to develop more than basic methodology with regard to non-physical healing. Such has been the emphasis upon delving into the past for the roots of current problems that more has been made of them than what they are, and the stress upon the necessity of re-living painful experiences may well deepen wounds rather than heal them. Furthermore, problems may even be created through the perusal of an individual's past. It is, however, encouraging to find that as in the case of primal therapy, theories are not accepted uncritically, and the Charismatic Movement has by and large maintained a markedly balanced attitude towards the subject of non-physical healing. Francis MacNutt replies to those who question the biblical basis for inner healing:

"It is simply the application of Christ's healing power to what we now know of the emotional nature of man. In no way does it deny the gospel, but builds upon it and applies to it what psychology has to say about the nature of man." <sup>33</sup>

Peter Hocken comments that inner healing has been most marked in the Catholic tradition as a result of widespread concern to revitalise the sacrament of penance. He correctly notes that inner healing as a psychological extension of the healing ministry leads to a greater awareness of healing as process, and not simply as event, also to lessened opposition between supernatural healing and natural processes of healing and recuperation<sup>34</sup>. It is notable that the exaggerations and inaccuracies concerning healing have tended to relate to cases where healing has been presented as instantaneous and 'unnatural', and greater acceptance of divine healing as a process has corrected much imbalance.

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33. op.cit.2. p.190.

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34. Peter Hocken: New Heaven? New Earth? Darton, Longman and Todd. 1976. p.28.

The emphasis on the satanic and on demonology which is to be found in the Charismatic Movement has pervaded the area of healing too. Indeed, one often finds healing and exorcism considered together with little or no distinction. Many writers acknowledge that sickness and disease may be caused directly by Satan, although this is not to say that all illness is the work of Satan. Mention is also made of Satanic healing, for Satan is able to heal through counterfeit gifts. The editorial in an early issue of Renewal stressed the necessity of the total rejection of spiritualism and other unscriptural methods of healing, and noted that the Church's healing ministry in both Britain and America had been invaded by those who practised spiritualism<sup>35</sup>. It is generally held that Satanic healing is distinguishable by its harmful side-effects, which adversely affect the person's well-being and relationship with God.

It has been taught in some circles that sickness may be caused by unhealthy relationships in the Church, and the importance of healthy relationships between Christians is frequently noted. MacNutt speaks of bitterness or repentance as a contributory factor to illness, and says that physical sickness may be a sign of disorder at the spiritual level<sup>36</sup>. The Fullness circle in particular has drawn attention to this aspect, and an article in Fullness states:

"... God, in his sovereign right over us, has declared that if we do not discern the unity of the Body of Christ, we will experience judgment in our physical body. Therefore a need for healing, and a lack of it, is often directly related to wrong relationships."<sup>37</sup>

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35. Editorial ("Healing too"): Renewal No.3. pp.19-20.

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36. op.cit.2. pp.176-177.

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37. Ern Baxter: "Relationships and Healing". Fullness Vol.10. pp.16-17.

Fullness has also claimed that it is possible for a Christian to be free from sickness and ill-health. This is clearly related to the teaching of some in this circle that Christians can attain a state of freedom from sin (see chapter 10), and erroneous doctrine is apparent here. John MacLauchlan writes:

"When you have inner certainty of healing, confess it! Resist symptoms which argue against health. Remember that salvation is one work. A temptation to sin though it seem subjective (as if the thought was yours) is not sin itself; it only becomes sin if it is entertained and harboured. Similarly, symptoms, though they are apparently subjective (as if you really have the illness they suggest) are not sickness. Just as you deliberately reject temptation to sin, so reject symptoms that argue against the wholeness you know in your heart that you have."

There are clear dangers in this teaching. Subjectivity and objectivity become merged, and considerable pressure may be exerted upon the individual. There may be difficulty in identifying the "inner certainty of healing", and it could be very harmful to "resist" symptoms when one may have been mistaken about one's healing. Furthermore, whilst salvation is "one work" broadly speaking, it is surely a composite process. MacLauchlan views it too simplistically. In his treatment of temptation and sin, his understanding of the Bible's teaching about human nature is at fault, and he also needs to qualify his distinction between "symptoms" and sickness itself. The instructions contained in the concluding paragraph are similarly facile, completely failing to come to terms with the complexity of the issues of sickness, suffering and healing:

"Corporately resist the recurrent bugs and infections that sweep through society. Practise on these minor ailments, because epidemics will get worse and out of hand. God wants to bring us to a place of immunity from such 'plagues of Egypt'!"<sup>38</sup>

Many people in the Charismatic Movement make a point of dissociating themselves from such teaching.

Another matter over which there has been some concern is the phenomenon of "falling in the Spirit" or "being slain in the Spirit". This causes a person to collapse involuntarily, usually backwards and in a state of suspended consciousness, when touched or prayed for by the person officiating. Mk.ch.9.v.20 is sometimes taken as a precedent for this, but one writer wonders whether it has something to do with a person having to stand up with their eyes closed for several minutes, which is bound to leave them unbalanced<sup>39</sup>. One lady has noted that the phenomenon also occurs in times of prayer and praise, and she believes that people 'under the power' are at Jesus's feet, receiving from Him the ministry which His contemporaries received face to face. She describes it as the Spirit becoming dominant over the mind, and states that if a person has genuinely fallen under the power, then something has certainly happened, though it may not be healing of the body<sup>40</sup>. Numerous other people have, however, expressed great hesitation over this phenomenon. In some cases, it appears to be more than anything else a technique, and, one suspects, perhaps even a gimmick, especially when helpers are positioned behind people to catch them as they fall<sup>41</sup>. Psychological and emotional factors may also play a part in its occurrence, and once again this is an area in which individuals are very susceptible and vulnerable to suggestion, and where care and responsibility are therefore of such paramount importance.

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39. D. Coomes: "Miracles: a normal part of life". Renewal No.50. April/May 1974. pp.18-20.

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40. Letter ("Resting in the Spirit"). Renewal No.74. April/May 1978. p.10.

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41. This often takes place at organized 'healing meetings'.

Whilst it is felt that God's desire is for health and wholeness, those who believe in divine healing have to face up to the fact that many people who seek healing are not healed. Magazines and newsletters contain many testimonies to healing, but other writers testify that healing has not been theirs<sup>42</sup>. Disappointment and perplexity are understandable when prayer and fasting, the laying on of hands, anointing with oil, and the corporate prayers of a whole fellowship have failed to bring about any apparent change in a person's condition. Many charismatics face this problem honestly, stating that they do not understand why some are not healed whilst others are. A positive attitude is usually adopted, and people are encouraged to enquire into God's purpose behind their suffering:

"Christians who are sick must seek God's healing power and, if healing is not experienced immediately, must seek God's purpose behind their being healed gradually or not at all."<sup>43</sup>

An elder in the Bradford House Church cast what light he could on the problem by saying that just as it is God's basic will to save, so it is his basic will to heal, but as not all are saved, neither are all healed. This element remains within God's sovereignty<sup>44</sup>. Ian Cockburn lists several reasons why a person may fail to receive or maintain healing. These include a lack of understanding (caused by inadequate instruction or teaching), failure to comply with the conditions of healing (in the realm of repentance or faith, personal or communal), failure to fulfill the need for healing of the memories before physical healing can take place, or the activity of evil spirits which must first be rebuked or cast out<sup>45</sup>.

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42. See for example: M. Bennett: "A Question of Freedom". Renewal No.50. April/May 1974. p.16; Pamela Moore: "If Jesus has a ministry to the broken-hearted what about me?" Renewal No.83. Oct/Nov. 1979. pp.15-18.

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43. Donald Werner: "The Christian in the school of suffering". Renewal No.91. Feb/March 1981. p.26.

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44. Interview with elder of Bradford House Church. February 1981.

William MacRae refers to Rom.ch.8.v.29 and states that whether God heals or not depends upon which will contribute to His purpose of conforming people to His image<sup>46</sup>. Kenneth Kinghorn is particularly helpful for the way in which he brings together the human concepts of healing and non-healing, and places both within God's healing purpose. He states that God heals in five ways: instantly and directly, gradually through the processes of nature; through medical science; by giving grace to suffer redemptively by healing one's attitudes; and by healing in the resurrection<sup>47</sup>. The latter two means often fail to qualify as healing from the human point of view, but placed within the divine perspective there is no such thing as non-healing. Such explanations as the above, however, rarely satisfy the critics. John MacArthur, for example, points out that Jesus healed everybody, both totally and instantaneously, and that there was no such thing as a non-organic 'progressive cure'. Furthermore, He healed organic disease and not just a disease, which many critics claim to be the only type that responds to healing today. And finally, Jesus raised the dead. Here he comments:

"There would be an easy way for the Charismatic claimants to the gift of healing to dispel all doubt. All they would have to do is to go on television (preferably one of the major secular networks) and restore to life a corpse that was at least three days dead."<sup>48</sup>

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45. Ian Cockburn: "Divine Healing (part 5)". Renewal No.42. Dec/Jan. 1973. pp.13-14.

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46. William MacRae: The Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts. Zondervan. 1976. p.72.

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47. Kenneth Kinghorn: Gifts of the Spirit. Abingdon Press. 1976. p.68.

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48. John F. MacArthur: The Charismatics: A Doctrinal Perspective. Zondervan. 1978. pp.143-151.



MacArthur goes on to point out that according to Scripture, those possessing gifts operated them entirely at will, whereas charismatics are not able to heal at will. He is of the opinion that charismatic 'healings' are based on questionable theology of the atonement, that many instances of healing by charismatics can be explained other than by divine intervention, and that healings which are occurring today can be explained biblically, but not according to the charismatic position. Whilst exaggerations and abuses are not denied by participants in the movement, MacArthur has failed to realise that there is no one 'charismatic position'. Many charismatic healers operate to some extent 'in the dark', with a limited understanding of how and why healing does or does not happen, but convinced that they are somehow involved in God's mysterious purposes. Francis MacNutt comments:

"There are multitudes of sick people. Some of them are not ready to be healed, even when they ask for prayer; for others who will be healed I am simply not the right person to pray for them. I cannot presuppose that I am supposed to pray for every sick person that I meet."

He adds that even if one is not to pray for healing for a person, one can still pray for them or give them a blessing<sup>49</sup>. The integrity, humility, and responsible attitude of people like MacNutt is to be respected. MacArthur is certainly correct in pointing to the difficulties of proving a healing, but this is not a matter which causes charismatics a great deal of concern, and they have little to say on the matter. However, the fact that illnesses do often later return after an apparent healing does suggest that MacArthur's suggestion that such healings may not have been the result of direct divine intervention may be substantiated. The possible role of auto-suggestion and 'natural' processes such as "mind over matter" could perhaps be considered here. Francis MacNutt has stated that there is a need for repeated sessions of prayer to ensure complete healing. He feels that one of the possible explanations for a 'loss of healing' is simply that the healing had not been completed, that something of the ailment was left and later grew back. He advocates sessions of 'soaking prayer' to

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49. op.cit.2. pp.187,198.

completely eradicate conditions such as cancer<sup>50</sup>.

The actual experience of a person as he exercises a healing ministry is of interest. Laurentin states that such a person feels a warmth, a slight trembling, and a sensation like the passing of fluid in their hands as they pray for a person<sup>51</sup>. MacNutt verifies this, and suggests that it involves the transfer of some life-giving power<sup>52</sup>. He thinks that the healing touch may be a natural potential which Christian prayer uses and elevates, much as the gift of preaching builds upon whatever natural speaking talents may already be there<sup>53</sup>. He describes his own healing ministry as more like a potential to be used by God than a gift which is under his own power<sup>54</sup>. Every Christian has this potential, but some have more of the gift, of the healing power, more spiritual authority, or more love<sup>55</sup>. Some people hold that the gift of healing is given not to the healer but to the healed. Although the logic of this argument is clear, to be consistent it should be applied to the other gifts of 1 Cor.ch.12, and the role of the healer, whilst by no means crucial in all cases, is frequently central to the healing. Whose faith is involved in healing, that of the healer, or that of the person seeking help? Opinions differ

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50. op.cit.3. pp.27,32. See pp.37-52 for further development of this theory.

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51. op.cit.7. See pp.119-122.

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52. op.cit.2. pp.200-201.

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53. op.cit.3. p.37.

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54. op.cit.2. p.301.

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55. op.cit.3. pp.91-92.

here, and it seems that in common with other aspects of the healing phenomenon there is no clear pattern.

In the midst of widespread discussion about healing, the Charismatic Movement has made numerous cautionary statements. It has frequently been pointed out that it is inaccurate to claim that the majority who seek healing receive it, and indeed the opposite may be true. Whilst agreeing that healing is a central part of the gospel, Tom Smail perceptively remarks that it is easy to become engrossed in healing as a thing in itself, and in effect to maintain only loose connections between it and the teaching and practice of Jesus. More care must be exercised in particular with inner healing, for there is the danger of introducing into Christian counselling psychological theories and techniques that proceed from a view of Man which has a very ambiguous relation to the gospel. This results in asking Christ to bless what neither comes from Him nor belongs to Him, and Smail considers this to be "a gnosticism of healing"<sup>56</sup>. John Richards echoes the concern of many when he stresses that the gift of healing should not be exercised in such a way as to dominate, manipulate, and pressurise others, causing anxiety rather than wholeness<sup>57</sup>. Michael Harper has reservations about healing services and has reached the conclusion that healing should rather be integrated into the total ministry of the Church, with the whole church accepting responsibility for it. He warns against the dangers of extremism, citing as an example of this the ministry of the 'lengthening of legs'. Whilst in no doubt that God has sometimes done this where there has been an obvious need for it, Harper regrets the unreasonable extreme of scores of people being prayed for when the difference is microscopically small, and then claiming they have seen the difference and their legs growing to compensate. His description of this as "unfortunate"<sup>58</sup> is a remarkably restrained one for what seems to be a

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56. Tom Smail: "In Tune With The Trinity". Theological Renewal No.5. Feb/March 1977. p.6.

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57. John Richards: "Spirit of evil?" Renewal No.75. June/July 1978. p.24.

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58. Michael Harper: This Is The Day. Hodder and Stoughton. 1979. pp82-86.

ludicrous practice when carried to such an extreme. These are just three of the numerous examples of the expression of caution and concern, and as well as the need for balance and correction, greater clarity is desirable with regard to a number of issues. Laurentin provides an accurate list of ambiguities, and says that distinctions must be made between salvation and healing, miracles and healing, magic and religion, the physical and the psychic, amongst others<sup>59</sup>.

Whilst controversies still surround claims to the exercise of the gift of healing in the Charismatic Movement, and analyses or explanations remain insufficient to satisfy many, three points stand out. The first of these is the reintroduction of the healing ministry into the local church, the second that healing is now largely thought of as a natural and normal part of the life of every Christian. This is similar to the predominant opinion now concerning speaking in tongues. And thirdly, the complexity of the issues involved can not to be over-estimated. Francis MacNutt writes:

"As I experience the paradoxes of the healing ministry, I become more and more aware of the mystery involved. Those who want simple answers and absolute clarity are bound to be disappointed."<sup>60</sup>

## B Miracles

There is much debate outside charismatic circles as well as within them concerning exactly how a miracle may be defined. D. Hughes provides the following definition:

"The word strictly means a supernatural intervention in the

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59. op.cit.7. p.117.

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60. op.cit.2. p.134.

ordinary course of nature: a temporary suspension of the accustomed order, an interruption of the system of nature as we know it. It is much more than coincidence. The gift here refers to acts of power ... The Church as the body of Christ has a claim on the miracle working power of Jesus. This power becomes concrete in the gift of the working of miracles." <sup>61</sup>

Belief in miracles and in God's direct intervention in today's world is believed by many to be one of the strengths of the Charismatic Movement, having helped many to come to a new realization of the immediacy of the presence of God. Adequate scientifically structured definitions of miracles are not likely to be formulated to the satisfaction of those who request them, but there is within the movement basic agreement as to their nature and purpose. They are usually presented as unusual phenomenal occurrences which result in an awareness of the presence of God, and it has been miracles of healing which have dominated the Charismatic Movement. Indeed, one is hard-pressed to find accounts of miracles which are not concerned with healing<sup>62</sup>, and it seems that there is frequently no distinction (as implied by 1 Cor.ch.12) between the two gifts, Francis MacNutt, however, differentiates as follows:

"The gift of miracles differs, I believe, from the gift of healing in that it creates where something was missing, while healing hastens or changes what would ordinarily be accomplished by the healing processes of nature." <sup>63</sup>

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61. D. Hughes: "The Gifts of Power". Renewal No.37. Feb/March 1972. pp.28-29.

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62. For an account of miracles such as walking on water and water changing into wine in the Indonesian revival, see Mel Tari: Like A Mighty Wind. Coverdale. 1973.

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63. op.cit.2. p.308.

Tom Flynn adds to this by stating that the gift of miracles is broader than the gift of healing, allowing greater scope for God to show His might and power than the latter<sup>64</sup>. The Catholic church provides a ready-made context for miracles, having maintained through the ages the tradition of the working of miracles, often in connection with the saints, relics and appearances of the Virgin Mary. The tradition continues today at the established healing centres, the most well-known of which is Lourdes, and the concept of the miracle has become so assimilated into Catholic thought that it allows for a much less narrowly defined definition of what a miracle actually is than is common to Protestants. Rene Laurentin has stated that the idea of a miracle being a defiance of the laws of nature was the response of Christian rationalism to atheistic rationalism, and he believes that this understanding of a miracle is now as outdated as the rationalism it was meant to counteract. This indicates that the contemporary concept of a miracle is passing through a stage of reassessment, and the Charismatic Movement certainly has yet to produce detailed consideration of the topic. Because of the close association with healing and the fact that the latter has been the centre of attention, it is understandable that detailed treatment is rarely deemed necessary.

As with the gift of healing, there is little differentiation between the exercise of the gift in New Testament times and its exercise now. However, some follow Kinghorn<sup>65</sup> in pointing out that although God continues to work miracles today, they are no longer required to validate the Christian message because the Church itself is God's sign to this age. Kinghorn believes that the occurrence of miracles today will thus most frequently be in the context of the unevangelized mission field, and this certainly concurs with the reports of miracles associated with revivals in some of the overseas mission areas.

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64. Tom Flynn: The Charismatic Renewal and the Irish Experience. Hodder and Stoughton. 1974. pp.114-115.

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65. op.cit.47. p.74.

But despite the relatively infrequent occurrence of miracles in the contemporary Charismatic Movement in Britain, there have been those who have encouraged a sensationalist approach to the subject. Such people have been mainly on the fringes of the movement, and their activities, which have inevitably tended to centre around healing, have been deplored by the majority of responsible leaders. Michael Harper states his reservations about the miracle service which involves expert showmanship and concentrates on the spectacular, describing this as the Charismatic Movement's own brand of "'hot dog' Christianity". His criticisms are strongly worded:

"There are minds which are bent in such a way that they can only really think in terms of the miracle ... There is often a narrow line between true faith which believes the miracle and human selfishness which demands it ... The charismatic renewal has produced a rash of miracle workers who tout their wares like travelling salesmen. There are the word of knowledge performers; slayers in the Spirit; leg lengtheners; and charismatic dentists, to name just a few. My own observations convince me that miracles have been genuinely performed, but that all too many use harmful techniques which make God into our servant rather than we into his. The Lord, according to some, is there at our beck and call. He is obedient to our demands rather than we to his. Often there is no real link between the miracle performed and the reason for which God has worked." <sup>66</sup>

Certainly, the emphasis upon miracles sometimes seems to obliterate other elements of Christianity, and one often gains the impression that a person is the dispenser of miracles rather than God. The movement has cause to be grateful that some are prepared to speak out against this kind of practice and to advocate a more balanced approach.

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66. op.cit.58. pp.82-86.

## C Prophecy

The gift of prophecy has achieved a growing prominence through its practice by Christians who have experienced charismatic renewal. Michael Harper speaks of a prophecy received at the Fountain Trust's first 'charismatic conference', which provided direction and encouragement for those involved in the Trust at its beginning<sup>67</sup>. The procedure at conferences has been to lay hands on any missionaries present, as the Church in Antioch did to Paul and Barnabas, and Harper states:

"Nearly always the Spirit gives words of prophecy which again and again have proved apposite to their needs."

He adds that they have heard years later how these words have been used to strengthen and encourage the missionaries during difficult times<sup>68</sup>.

Prophecy is understood as the words of God, usually in the person of the Father or the Son, which a person is lead by the Holy Spirit to deliver, generally to a group of people. The prophecy may take the form of a description of a picture, symbol, or image, or simply a prose address which the 'prophet' has been led to deliver. Most prophecies consist of words of exhortation, and contain material which includes recognizable biblical allusions and phraseology. The language is often that of 'King James English', and the frequent occurrence of the phrase "my people" or "my children" makes it clear that the speaker, or to be more precise the originator, of the prophecy is presented as being God. A number of prophecies have been published in Renewal and no editorial comment is made concerning them, other than information as to where the prophecy was received<sup>69</sup>. The subject of prophecy has received attention several times

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67. Michael Harper: None Can Guess. Hodder and Stoughton. 1971. p.75.

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68. op.cit.67. p.81.

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69. See for example, "Prophecies given in St. Peter's Rome during Eucharist on Pentecost Monday". Renewal No.58. Aug/Sept. 1975. p.6; "Prophecy given at the Westminster Conference". Renewal No.59. Oct/Nov. 1975. p.7.; and "Reading prophecy". Renewal. No.64. Aug/Sept. 1976. p.19.



in the magazine. David Smith defines prophecy as:

"... a portion of God's truth to give in love in the present"

and notes that this may include a look into the past or the future. He also remarks upon the immediacy and impact upon a person of a word direct from God, and the corrective, upbuilding, and consoling function of prophecy<sup>70</sup>. Chris Begg denotes forthtelling and foretelling as the constituents of prophecy and defines its function as the provision of direction, warning, comfort and instruction<sup>71</sup>. These are among the clearer definitions of the gift. Others are rather vague and convey the impression that the term is being used more loosely. For instance, the gift of prophecy serves to "sense the will and word of God for His kingdom" in the context of prayer for governmental policies and social matters<sup>72</sup>. In an article in Theological Renewal, Bob Gordon states that although prophets speak with immediacy to the people of God and bring truth to bear in new ways, they are not doctrinal innovators. He feels that there can be no better description of the nature and purpose of prophecy than the one given by David Watson in his book One In The Spirit, in which he writes:

"It is a word from the Lord through a member of the body of Christ, inspired by the Spirit, to build up the rest of the body."<sup>73</sup>

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70. David Smith: "Guarding the Gifts". Renewal No.64. Aug/Sept.1976. p.24

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71. Chris Begg: "Love In Context". Renewal No.39. June/July 1972. p.23.

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72. Susan B. Anthony: "Prayer and Social Action". Renewal No.43. Feb/Mar.1973. p.22.

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73. R.G. Gordon: "Prophecy in the Old Testament and in the Church." Theological Renewal No.3. June/July 1976. pp.7-14.

Gerard Noel provides a succinct definition of prophecy from his observations of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal:

"'Prophecy' in the spiritual sense does not, of course, mean the capacity to foretell events; it rather inspires the ability to expound or proclaim divine reality - or pass on a divine command - in persuasive, even inspirational, language." <sup>74</sup>

Heribert Muhlen esteems the gift of prophecy highly:

"... when you yourself hear a prophetic contribution and are able to accept it as God's word to you, to the congregation, to the Church, then you experience God's presence more intensively than you would in situations in which you are alone or are merely thinking about God." <sup>75</sup> (my italics)

The Catholic charismatics too are often to be found using the term in a looser way, and this follows customary Church usage. Edward O'Connor writes that up to Vatican II, Catholic doctrine had preserved the term 'prophetic' almost exclusively for the official teaching office in the Church. But Pope Paul liked to use the term in "a broader and livelier" sense: for example, he referred to 'the prophetic spark of witnessing'. Catholic charismatics frequently make use of the term in a more general manner similar to this <sup>76</sup>.

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74. Gerard Noel: The Anatomy of the Catholic Church. Hodder and Stoughton. 1980. See pp.262-271.

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75. op.cit.19. p.317.

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76. Edward O'Connor: Pope Paul and the Spirit. Ava Maria Press. 1978. p.12.

George Every contributes an essay on "Prophecy in the Christian Era" to New Heaven? New Earth?<sup>77</sup>. He believes that Pentecostal and charismatic movements continue a kind of prophetic activity that is found in all periods, and that the typical exercise of prophecy amongst Christians is in the spiritual interpretation of Scripture. Furthermore:

"Every Christian who meditates on the work of Christ, and reads the signs of his presence in the Bible, in the history of the world and of the Church, and in the course of his own life, has some share, through the power of the Spirit, in the prophetic office of all Christians."

It is his contention that in a consideration of prophecy the whole history of allegorical interpretation is relevant, along with the history of other forms of prophecy practised in the Church in the age of the Fathers and the 'Dark Ages'. Every follows St. Thomas Aquinas in drawing a distinction between 'natural prophecy' and prophecy which is a gift of the Spirit. All prophecy is insight, followed by judgment, and a prophet is a seer not only of future events but into present situations. Prophets may have hunches about matters that can be discovered by other means, but prophetic sight is distinct in its awareness of what is distinct from normal vision and cognition. This is often associated with an aptitude or disposition, but, claims Every, no one is prophetic or 'psychically sensitive' the whole time, and prophecy involves more than this aptitude or sensitivity. His broad understanding of prophecy is illustrated by the following passage:

"This may take the form of a reading, from Scripture or from some spiritual writer, with or without comment, or of a prophetic saying or showing. I have heard prophecies take the form of a picture, a symbolic image described, but not otherwise put into words, that clarifies the position ...

"All these forms of prophecy have a history in Christian

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77. op.cit.34. pp.163-206.

tradition. The common element seems to be an inspired reading of signs, including tongues, music and visual symbols, but also texts from the Scriptures, hymns and other writing in poetry and prose, followed by a word spoken or a deed done that implies a judgment on the situation. The prophetic word or deed may be a good expression of the sense of the meeting, in which case it is not revelation but testimony, inspired extra-sensory perception, on the level of natural prophecy, or it may be so unfamiliar and unexpected that it looks and sounds like a startling innovation, but if it is truly of the Spirit it will contribute to the renewal of tradition. In considering the prophetic actions of Pentecostal and other charismatic prayer groups the foundation of new monastic communities provides useful analogies."

Two additional points may be noted here. Firstly, there is a hint that prophecy may on occasion enter the sphere of revelation. And secondly, extra-sensory perception is conceived of as a neutral phenomenon rather than a phenomenon originating from an evil source, as it is more often understood by Christians. Every writes in regard to this:

"The most important practical difference between Catholic and Protestant approaches to Pentecostal experience is in attitudes to the natural basis of prophetic insight. In our day this is called extra-sensory perception; it operates without regard to space or time, and often involves precognition ... To nearly all Protestants and some Catholics inspiration is either of the Holy Spirit or very perilous."

To a growing number of people, there is room for neutral bases to these phenomena, and a broad understanding of prophecy such as is shared by most Catholic charismatics certainly accomodates this more comfortably. Any statement or action which seems true and valuable may be described as 'prophetic': charismatic communities, for example, are 'prophetic' and Every describes them as "acted prophecies". It is common too for contemporary figures such as Malcolm Muggeridge and Solzhenitsyn to be described as "prophets".

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of prophecy for the non-participant to understand is how a person knows that God wishes to speak through them, and what is involved in the process by which a prophecy is delivered. In describing this, Michael Harper writes that the first words of the prophecy are usually given to the person who is to manifest the gift. These come into the mind without premeditation, but with real persistence, and it is necessary to start speaking in faith, for as the given words are spoken, more words will enter the mind. Harper draws an analogy with packets of cleaning tissues: when one tissue is removed from the box, another one follows it, and so the process is repeated. The person involved will learn sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and to His direction to begin speaking. However, there must also be sensitivity to and acceptance of His direction to stop speaking at the right time, for some people warm to their message and continue speaking after the anointing has passed. At this point the message ceases to be edifying. The teaching here is clearly that the Holy Spirit actually gives the words of a prophecy, and that what is received in a person's mind is indeed actual words and not just a general feeling as to what the message should be<sup>78</sup>. People who have exercised the gift, however, do not all find that this is so. Some have only a general idea of what the content is to be, and find either that words come as they begin to speak or that they have a confidence and conviction that what they continue to say is inspired by the Spirit. Some writers suggest that one 'learns' to prophesy in that the gift develops gradually. R. Edward Miller states that 1 Cor.ch.14.v.21 implies a learning process and advises that 'the learner' should remain within the learning realms of edification, exhortation and comfort. Three other realms of prophecy are more open to deception and because of their very nature, only the more experienced 'prophets' should enter into them. These realms are: 'The secrets of the heart made manifest' (1 Cor.ch.14.v.25: an operation of the word of knowledge); the foretelling of things to come (also an operation of the word of knowledge); and guidance (an operation of the word of wisdom)<sup>79</sup>.

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78. op.cit.24. p.76.

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79. R. Edward Miller: "Prophecy. A question and answer study". Renewal No.32. April/May 1971. pp.27-30.

Heribert Muhlen also hints at a development of one's gift of prophecy through practice:

"If someone is granted the gift of prophecy, he listens inwardly to the appeals and instructions of the living, risen Lord and asks himself: What would Jesus say here and now if he were still with us as the man of Nazareth? ... " 80

"To begin with it is useful advice to read the Gospels widely and note the sayings of Jesus that are recorded in them. During the service of prayer the Holy Spirit will recall them to your mind and indicate when in Christ's place you should bring them before the congregation. Everything happens with the aim of building up. You will grow further into the gift of prophecy if you let yourself be led by God's Spirit." 81

In his writings, David Parry also speaks about the development of the gift:

"A prophet in whom the gift is coming into force often has an internal struggle as he feels he should use it, makes an utterance and yet is not sure of what his impulse means. As with certain other gifts however it grows in power. Sometimes it seems it has to grow in purity, inasmuch as the rendering of a divine message without any personal admixture does not always come at once." 82

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80. op.cit.19. pp.149-150.

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81. op.cit.19. p.318.

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82. David Parry: Not Mad, Most Noble Festus. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1979. pp.95-97.

The similarities and differences between prophecy in the Old and the New Testaments and prophecy today have received the attention of Bob Gordon in Theological Renewal. He makes the point that the 'universalizing' of prophetic potentiality to every believer (Acts ch.2.v.18) makes the greatest difference between Old Testament and New Testament prophecy. He also mentions Friedrich's theory in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament that whilst Old and New Testament prophets have the similarity of sharing the conviction of divine direction, there is a difference in that the New Testament prophet is subject to a control which was absent for most of the Old Testament prophets. This control is the immediate discernment of others in relation to the genuineness of the utterance. Gordon follows E. Best in his definition of three levels of prophetic revelation in the New Testament church which find parallels within the classical prophets too. These are the revelation of things yet to be (Acts ch.11.v.28), the ordering of the Church (Acts ch.13.vv.1-3; 1 Tim.ch.1.v.18), and the revelation of something not yet properly understood (Eph.ch.3.vv.5-6; Col.ch.1.v.26; Rom.ch.16.vv.25ff.). In the case of foretelling the future, the purpose of prophecy is to call the hearer to repentance and practical holiness, and Gordon believes that a realization of this is important in contemporary experience:

"It is only as the true nature and real purpose of the prophetic gift is held in view that the danger of wrong use and false prediction can be avoided." <sup>83</sup>

Michael Harper believes it is clear that prophets had a special and unique role in the early Church, which continued on into the second century, before the canon of the New Testament had become established and largely accepted throughout the Christian world. But by the end of the second century the prophets were "on the way out", the New Testament canon being nearly established and there being less need for their type of ministry. He distinguishes between the prophets' authoritative ministry similar to that of the apostles, which ceased, and the prophetic element which has

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83. R.G. Gordon: "Prophecy In the Old Testament and in the Church". Theological Renewal No.3. June/July 1976. pp.7-14.

always remained in the Church. This element has mushroomed up at the Church's better moments and has only been quenched by institutionalism and scribalism, such as extreme fundamentalism. The prophecy of Joel fulfilled at Pentecost declares the new age to be one of profuse prophesying (Acts ch.2.v.18) and Harper believes that the charismatic gift of prophecy has continued in the Church ever since, as has the ministry of the prophet in a secondary sense like that of apostles. One should not look for prophets today in the same sense in which some were regarded in the New Testament. Their roles then in the founding of the Church and the establishment of the New Testament Scriptures were unique and therefore unrepeatable<sup>84</sup>.

It is at this point that there is a need for clarity. One is faced with the differing usage of identical terms. Harper, for instance, distinguishes between the New Testament prophet and the modern prophet (see chapter 11), but other writers do not make it clear whether they would make any such distinction. Similarly, the gift of prophecy may be defined very stringently or extremely loosely, and the term 'prophetic' frequently appears as already illustrated in a very general sense. With regard to the actual prophetic office, the issue has shifted to one of authority as opposed to the actual charismatic gift, and this needs to be recognised in order to avoid much of the current confusion concerning the gift of prophecy. The prophetic vocation, however, is linked with the gift of prophecy, and in connection with this, particular attention should be paid to Fullness magazine. Fullness describes itself as follows:

"Fullness by its very nature will never have the popular appeal of the more respectable or middle of the road publications. We are determined to retain a clear prophetic voice."<sup>85</sup>

Considerable importance is attributed to the subject, and Volume 9 is

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84. Michael Harper: Let My People Grow. Hodder and Stoughton. 1977. pp.190-191.

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85. Graham Perrins: Editorial. Fullness Vol.10. p.3.



devoted entirely to the prophetic ministry, with which the gift of prophecy is intrinsically involved:

"The subject of prophecy and prophetic ministry ... is of more than academic or specialised interest. The whole Church must understand its prophetic vocation in the end time." <sup>86</sup>

This prophetic ministry is described by John MacLauchlan in terms of two aspects, and the first of these is the work of "breaking down":

"The prophet is a pioneer who breaks down false vision and concepts ... This role is essential in our day, when centuries of false teaching and merely human concepts and structures have to be cleared away before God's purposes in restoration can be fulfilled. God does not set out to adapt lives and churches. Rather, if their foundation is wrong, he pulls them down in order to make all things new ... The prophet comes with a destructive word, challenging the status quo. He challenges false ideas and structures, destroying false security and vain hopes ... The prophet is not always popular!"

The second aspect is that of "building up" and because a sense of purpose and direction is indispensable to its growth, the Church cannot be built without prophetic ministry<sup>87</sup>. As presented by the Fullness circle, the prophetic ministry has a definite judgmental emphasis to it, and this is in keeping with the Fullness attitude to the established churches. With this, we may compare the words of R. Edward Miller in Renewal:

" ... the prophecy of condemnation can never be the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit may rebuke, exhort and chide yet He does

86. Graham Perrins: Editorial. Fullness Vol.9. p.3.

87. John MacLauchlan: "The Scope of the Prophet's Ministry". Fullness Vol.9. pp.4-5.

it with great tenderness, always influencing one into repentance and love, ever showing the way out of the problem ... condemnatory prophetic utterances, which are usually harsh of tone and devastating to the hearer, should be recognised as from another spirit, not the Spirit of God." 88

Nevertheless, David Mansell makes a valid point when he states:

" ... To say 'I love you says the Lord' is always a true statement of fact, but it may not be what God is saying now into the situation ... " 89

This should perhaps be considered by a movement in which prophecy has often centred upon promises of God's love and forgiveness to the exclusion of all else. The emphasis in Fullness is more upon 'the prophetic ministry' than the prophetic gift of 1 Cor.ch.12. What, then, is the distinction between the two, and in what way are they connected? John MacLauchlan states that there is no biblical foundation for the view that a prophet is simply one who habitually exercises a gift of prophecy. The gift of prophecy, to be desired by all believers, is for edification, exhortation and comfort, whereas the prophet's ministry involves much more, for example, foundational revelation (Eph.ch.3y.5) and the impartation of future vision:

"Prophecy is utterance born of the Spirit expressed in the commonly understood language of speaker and hearers. There is no biblical warrant for this to be restricted to a particular style of speech or mode of delivery. Hence, the ministry of the prophet will include prophecy, but the scope of that prophecy will go beyond that of the gift manifested by any member of the body of Christ. We may add that there is no biblical warrant for futuristic prophecy or personal, directive prophecy outside the

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88. op.cit.79.

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89. David Mansell: "The Gift of Prophecy". Fullness Vol.9. pp.15-16.

ministry of the prophet (see Acts ch.11,vv.27ff.; Acts ch.21.vv.10-11)." <sup>90</sup>

This author clearly teaches that a person with the gift of prophecy should not be designated a prophet solely by virtue of this. The prophetic office is different from the gift of prophecy and should be treated as such. Malcolm Muggeridge and Solzhenitsyn clearly would not qualify here.

There has been much debate in recent years concerning the relationship between the gift of prophecy and teaching. Participants and non-participants in the Charismatic Movement are equally divided over the issue. Some hold that both teaching and preaching are distinct from prophecy, others that prophetic insight may be present in the unconscious inspiration of someone who preaches the gospel. Yet others balance the two by emphasising that teaching and prophecy are complementary and work together, the first speaking more to the intellect, the second addressing the heart and conscience. The question undoubtedly is in need of clarification, and the unease that characterises attempts at clearcut statements is reflected in the Joint Statement of the Church of England Evangelical Council and the Fountain Trust in 1977. The uneasy distinction drawn between prophecy and teaching shows that members of the group responsible for the Statement held different opinions on the matter. Whilst agreeing that the New Testament phenomenon of prophecy is not identified there with the gift and ministry of teaching, they then make the rather indeterminate statement that preaching may at times approximate more to prophecy, although its basic character is one of teaching and exhortation<sup>91</sup>. Such fluidity between the concepts in question is typical of any comments about this apparently intricate but ill-defined relationship.

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90. John MacLauchlan: "Q & A". Fullness Vol.9. p.11.

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91. Joint Statement: Church of England Evangelical Council and Fountain Trust. Theological Renewal Occasional Paper No.1. April/May 1977. p.10.

The issue of the relationship between Scripture and prophecy is, however, much more decisively dealt with. The Fountain Trust and its associates have always stated categorically that prophecy and Scripture are distinct in that Scripture cannot be added to and is the ultimate authority over prophecy. The latter must be brought to the test of Scripture. Michael Harper distinguishes clearly between the Scriptures which are God's word and have universal and eternal application, and prophecy which must be judged in order to determine whether it really is God speaking or not<sup>92</sup>. And in response to the question "Can prophetic revelation be higher than the Word?", R. Edward Miller replies in Renewal:

"The Spirit and the Word always agree. God can never be in disharmony with Himself ... The written Word is always a true touchstone to prove the prophetic utterance. If there is any open disagreement of the prophetic utterance with the Word, keep the written word of God and discard the prophecy."<sup>93</sup>

This is all very clear. However, not everybody distinguishes so clearly between prophecy and Scripture. Kenneth Kinghorn seeks to maintain a very delicate position when he writes:

"Current prophecy will not result in a new revelation - holy scripture remains normative for the church's doctrine. Prophecy will, however, bring new inspiration and illumination as it is spoken under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Prophecy remains an important avenue through which God presently addresses modern man. Blessed is the congregation that hears and heeds the inspired word of God."<sup>94</sup>

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92. op.cit.24. p.77.

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93. op.cit.79.

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94. op.cit.47. pp.50-51.

Is the reference to the "inspired word of God" a reference to Scripture or prophecy, or both? And what is the nature of the new inspiration and illumination brought about through prophecy? Is Kinghorn saying one thing and implying another, or is it unreasonable to demand a greater measure of clarity? These questions will be considered in chapter 16. Some people find it helpful in discussing the relationship between prophecy and Scripture to distinguish between the *λογος* and the *ρημα*. The *λογος* is universal, eternal and objective, whilst the *ρημα* is particular, temporal and subjective. Prophecy normally falls into the category of *ρημα* since it is a word for a particular time and situation, and this enables Scripture and prophecy to be placed in different but related categories<sup>95</sup>. People who find such distinctions unconvincing and are concerned about the implications of further revelation have little choice but to reject the claims to the gift of prophecy which have been made since the canon of Scripture was closed. If no satisfactory distinction between Scripture and prophecy can be made, then because no further revelation is available today, the gift of prophecy can no longer be present in the Church<sup>96</sup>.

Catholic statements about the relationship between Scripture and prophecy tend to be ambiguous because of the already complex relationship between Scripture and tradition. The implication is already there of additional revelation to that of the Scriptures. Because of this, Catholicism is able to accommodate the gift of prophecy more comfortably than Protestantism. Peter Hocken gives a representative view when he writes of:

"... the impossibility of a total separation between the contrasting elements, the original and the ongoing, there being a

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95. See for example, Francis MacNutt: *op.cit.*3. p.28.

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96. One person who arrives at his conclusion in this way is William McRae: *op.cit.*46. p47. MacRae concludes that most of the 1 Cor.ch.12 gifts were but temporary, whereas others such as faith, teaching, etc. are permanent.

sense in which both Christian prophecy and Christian tradition precede and find embodiment in the written Word." <sup>97</sup>

Many participants in the Charismatic Movement maintain an open mind about the possibility of further revelation being communicated through prophecy. Whilst few state categorically whether prophecy may or may not contain additional revelation to that contained in the Bible, the least one could say is that the possibility of this being so is left open. Indeed, if one follows through the implications of what they do say, the possibility of further revelation is inherent, and presumably this may come through prophecy. This is particularly so in the case of the Fullness circle of house churches.

An additional point to be noted is a certain emphasis upon the role of 'prophets' in interpreting the Scriptures. John Maclauchlan writes of today's prophets:

"They are not chained to the interpretations and ideas of the past, nor do they cast off the valid legacy of the past. But with divine insight, and by revelation, they can open locked doors and unseal stored truths. They work from principles which they receive from the heart of God." <sup>98</sup> (my italics)

In a later volume, he develops this further:

"Much confusion has resulted from the misconception that every man is his own Bible interpreter. Indeed many have become so disillusioned with conflicts of opinion in the area of bible prophecy that they have abandoned the field entirely! I believe there is a key to this muddle in 2 Pet.ch.1.vv.20-21 ... The implication is that prophecy must be interpreted the same way it

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97. . op.cit.34. p.25.

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98. op.cit.87.

was given: by prophets, 'men moved by the Holy Spirit'. Basically, then, insight into the prophetic scriptures will come from prophets. We need a release of this vital ministry, and we need to give heed to it." <sup>99</sup>

Presumably, this is not necessarily a role to be fulfilled by all who exercise the gift of prophecy, but by those who also have a prophetic office.

In spite of the fact that differing views of the gift of prophecy circulate in the Charismatic Movement, it is unanimously agreed that the gift can be, and has been, misused in some cases. In prophecy, the Holy Spirit combines with the imperfect human spirit, thereby using an imperfect channel, and this may result in imperfect prophecy. There has been a tendency to emphasise the manifestation of the gift rather than the content of the message, and a resultant failure to inquire about the content and challenge of the prophecy. Most agree that every prophecy is to be carefully judged and tested by the Scriptures before it is accepted as a true word from the Holy Spirit, and that the gift of discernment is to be exercised over it by those so qualified. Many people warn of the dangers of erroneous prophecy. George Every makes the important point that false prophets are not necessarily heretics or receiving their inspiration from an evil source. He illustrates this by reference to Montanism, writing:

"The critical importance of Montanism is not that it provoked a reaction against prophecy, but that it provided a classic instance of false prophets who were not otherwise heretics." <sup>100</sup>

Maurice Smith, writing in Fullness, takes this point a step further. He describes his own personal experience of a prophecy directed at himself, which he accepts may have been true but which was delivered in such a

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99. John MacLauchlan: "Q & A". Fullness Vol.12. p.15.

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100. George Every: op.cit.34. p.169.

violent and unloving way that it caused him years of anguish:

"Oh how vital the spirit of anything is. We may even utter untruth and not damage folk unduly; but ironically, we can speak the truth in the wrong way and do untold damage. Just being right is not enough." 101

Catholic writers have pinpointed a further possible misapplication of prophecy, in that prophecies are given by God to a particular group for a particular time and situation. Prophecies are therefore not necessarily meant to be universal and Francis MacNutt is very wary of the practice of publishing and circulating magazines full of prophecies, such as occurs in America:

"Prophecies circulated around from group to group may be listened to, if they witness to your spirit, but the normal means of receiving a prophetic word is found in 1 Cor.ch.14. It is to be given to a specific congregation and judged by others. Such words given to other groups may not fit what is happening in your own congregation." 102

A speaker at a Catholic Leaders' Conference agreed with this and warned of:

"... the danger of taking for ourselves prophecy given to other people, at another time and in another place which may not necessarily be what the Lord is saying to us." 103

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101. Maurice Smith: "An ABC of prophecy: some lessons learned in the school of experience". Fullness Vol.9. pp.17-19.

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102. op.cit.3. p.234.

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103. Taped talk at Leaders' Conference. Hopwood Hall. 1980.



A common practice which is disapproved of by Michael Harper is that of prefacing a prophecy with the words, 'Thus saith the Lord'. Harper objects to this practice on two grounds, firstly that it may be deemed presumptuous to use the words of the Old Testament prophets, and secondly, that it may lead people to accept a prophecy as possessing inerrancy. It is much harder, he says, to 'weigh' a prophecy when the person prophesying categorically states that it is the Lord speaking<sup>104</sup>.

It is notable that the people who show the greatest awareness of the misuse of this gift are the ones who value it the most highly and feel that its exercise is of strategic importance for the Church. The frequency with which matters concerning the gift of prophecy are raised in letters' columns and on question and answer pages illustrates the interest in the topic in the Charismatic Movement, and indeed the recognition of the necessity of clear and biblical teaching about it. Michael Harper concludes:

"We need to hear the authentic voice of prophecy, not the mere repeating parrot-fashion of radical shibboleths. <sup>105</sup>

A more recent article in Renewal describes prophecy as "The troublesome but vital gift" and the following excerpts provide a fitting conclusion to this section:

"Prophecy is a troublesome gift. The fears and anxieties which church leaders today often voice when the subject of prophecy is raised are not surprising. In the early Church problems and confusion caused by abuse of the gift seem to have contributed to its disappearance.

"Today through charismatic renewal the Church has the opportunity

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104. op.cit.67. p.77.

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105. Michael Harper: Bishops Move. Hodder and Stoughton. 1978. p.24.

to recover the strength and guidance which are available to her in prophetic gifts. Tens of thousands today have experienced the power of prophecy to uplift and encourage, to deepen the experience of worship, to give guidance and insight. At a time when the Church badly needs the experience of the immediate presence and power of God, prophetic gifts are of immense value.

"However, I believe the charismatic renewal could well fail in its efforts to commend prophetic gifts to the wider Church. That failure could result from on the one hand, a lack of genuine and powerful exercise of prophecy, or on the other, an excess of frivolous, spurious prophecy.

"Prophecy must be governed well if it is to prosper ... " 106

## Chapter 8.

### THE CHARISMATIC GIFTS: PART 3

#### A The Discerning of Spirits

There has been considerable vagueness in the past concerning the nature of this gift. In Protestantism the term has often been used very loosely to describe any degree or depth of discernment such as one might expect to find in any person with average abilities of perception. The Catholic Church too has interpreted this gift very broadly, tending to present it not so much as a charism, but as a function of bishops and spiritual directors when exercising leadership, authority and pastoral counsel. Whilst the Catholic Charismatic Renewal has now to some extent remoulded this understanding, one still finds somewhat loose definitions, as in the words of Heribert Muhlen when he writes:

"Through the gift of discernment the power to discriminate - which is not given to the same extent to everyone - is purified by the Holy Spirit and placed at the disposal of the Church." <sup>1</sup>

A more precise definition of the gift has, however, increasingly been elucidated throughout the Charismatic Movement, and it is now generally held that it involves the ability to distinguish between divine, human, and demonic powers, particularly when it is necessary to identify the source of a specific utterance or action. It has often been mistakenly assumed that the only distinction to be made is between the divine and the demonic, the spiritual and the spiritistic. But the correction of dualistic theology in many spheres of the movement continues to rectify this and to show that when a so-called divine utterance proves to be false, it is frequently from a merely human source rather than a demonic one. James McManus has an accurate approach when he says:

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1. Heribert Muhlen: A Charismatic Theology. Burns and Oates. 1978.

"In a person's life ... the Holy Spirit is at work, but also the human spirit is at work and maybe an evil spirit is also at work." <sup>2</sup>

In an article in Theological Renewal<sup>3</sup>, James Dunn states that Classical Pentecostalism has laid such stress upon demonic possession and exorcism that it has misinterpreted the gift of discerning of spirits in the light of this. He points out that Paul placed the gift immediately after prophecy in 1 Cor.ch.12.v.10, whereas Pentecostal expositions have frequently misplaced it and grouped it with the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge as one of the 'three gifts of revelation'. In the typical exposition, discerning of spirits is usually presented as a divinely given insight which makes the believer aware of the presence and activity of evil spirits. As such, it features regularly in accounts of exorcisms as the gift which enabled the believer to recognise demon possession and the need for exorcism. Dunn is correct in feeling that as is the case with so many other points, neo-Pentecostals have largely taken over this Pentecostal tradition of exegesis without subjecting it to anything approaching an adequate criticism. It has therefore become necessary to redefine the meaning and role of this gift in terms nearer to Paul's original intention and more beneficial to the wider Charismatic Movement. The point is that for Paul, discerning of spirits goes alongside prophecy. Francis Sullivan has also recognised this:

"Note that after prophecy, Paul lists the discernment of spirits. These gifts are closely associated. Not every spirit is from God. Not everyone who claims to be a prophet is one. This has been badly understood in charismatic circles as the ability to discern the presence of evil. How much more it is to do with

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2. James McManus: The Ministry of Deliverance in the Catholic Tradition. National Service Committee. 1980. p.27.

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3. James Dunn: "According to the Spirit of Jesus". Theological Renewal No.5. Feb/Mar.1977. pp.16-22.

discerning between true prophecy and false prophecy." <sup>4</sup>

And George Every takes this a step further:

"Discernment of spirits is more than a matter of discerning truth from error and delusion. It is also a matter of distinguishing between the group's common mind and the illumination of the Spirit when he tells us more than we think and more than the prophetic speaker and those who listen to him can immediately understand." <sup>5</sup>

Dunn goes on to say that this gift is complementary to that of prophecy in that it safeguards against the abuse of prophecy, and by extension provides a check on all claims to inspiration. This is implied in 1 Cor.ch.12.v.10, where discerning of spirits stands in the same relation to prophecy as interpretation of tongues does to various kinds of tongues. If the second partner in each pair is absent, the first partner cannot function properly. Dunn concludes that discerning of spirits will include evaluation both in the sense of determining the source of the utterance (Spirit of Christ, other spirit) and in the sense of interpreting the meaning of the Spirit's words for the assembly (content).

There is now considerable agreement by charismatics with the points made by Dunn. Why has this link between prophecy and the discerning of spirits so often gone unnoticed? Dunn suggests that this is because the real character of prophecy as inspired speech has long been obscured in Christianity in the definition of prophecy simply as preaching or as the spiritual interpretation of Scripture. This is an accurate observation, and it is certainly true that a correct understanding of the nature of prophecy and a more balanced biblical interpretation and demonology has

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4. Francis Sullivan in taped talk on: "Other Charismatic Gifts". Hawkstone Hall (undated).

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5. George Every in Peter Hocken et al: New Heaven? New Earth?. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1976. p.198.

resulted in a more accurate presentation of the gift of discerning of spirits in the Charismatic Movement.

### B Speaking in Tongues

Speaking in tongues, or glossolalia, is one of the most fascinating aspects of the Charismatic Movement and, inevitably, one of the most controversial. Study of the subject of tongue-speaking has grown increasingly complex over the years, with contributions from the sociological, psychological and linguistic disciplines as well as the theological. In particular, it has been recognised that the phenomenon is to be found in other religions and sub-cultures and is by no means confined to Christianity. David Christie-Murray has stated that one in every four or five hundred of the world's present inhabitants has at some time spoken in Christian tongues, and that if non-Christian glossolalia is included this proportion is higher<sup>6</sup>.

Whilst speaking in tongues has attracted considerable outside attention, there has undoubtedly been an over-emphasis of it within the movement, and people have been encouraged to seek this gift in particular. Earlier over-emphasis of tongues has, however, now been largely corrected. It is particularly noticeable that whereas the gift received considerable attention in the early 'charismatic' literature, this has been markedly less so in publications since the mid-seventies, which have made infrequent mention of tongues and have concentrated more upon the Church and relationships within the Body of Christ. The gift of tongues has nevertheless tended to be set apart from the other gifts and theological reasons have been advanced to justify this. Michael Harper, for example, feels that tongues should in some respects be distinguished from the other gifts on the following grounds. Firstly, it is the only new gift given to the Church by the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant. Harper states that the

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6. David Christie-Murray: Visions From The Gods: Speaking With Tongues. Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1978. p.ix.

other eight were in operation during the Old Covenant, and he includes interpretation of tongues here on the basis of Daniel's interpretation of the writing on the wall in Dan.ch.5.v.26. Secondly, the gift of tongues differs from the others in being a God-directed manifestation. Man speaks to God through the gift of tongues, whereas the other gifts are ways in which God manifests His grace and love to men. Harper is adamant that the crowd at Pentecost was "simply eavesdropping on the Church at worship". Finally, whereas the other gifts are said to edify the Church, the gift of tongues edifies the individual who exercises it, unless it is coupled with the gift of interpretation, in which case it will edify the Church and will be equivalent in value to prophecy<sup>7</sup>.

There has been much discussion about what exactly the gift of tongues is. It is described by charismatics as the utterance of sounds and syllables that do not constitute any language that the person speaking has learnt or understands. To the listener, it is like hearing a foreign language, and the 'tongue' may have all the variations of ordinary speech in volume, speed and expression. Some people claim to have some idea of what they are saying when they speak in tongues, but this is usually a general idea rather than a detailed one. Descriptions of tongues as ecstatic speech or emotional gibberish are inaccurate, for the speech is normally under the control of the speaker, although the onset of tongue-speaking may well be a very emotional and relatively uncontrolled occurrence. Michael Harper gives several examples of people experiencing the gift of tongues. These include illiterate Indian girls praying in English, a language which they had never learnt, in India in 1907<sup>8</sup>, an Anglican vicar and his wife in a Midlands town in the early 1960s<sup>9</sup>, a London architect who received the

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7. Michael Harper: Walk In The Spirit. Hodder and Stoughton. 1968. pp.66-67.

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8. Michael Harper: As At The Beginning. Hodder and Stoughton. 1965. p.33.

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9. op.cit.8. pp.80-81.

gift whilst taking a bath in 1962<sup>10</sup>, and Harper himself in 1963<sup>11</sup>. Other people have described how they initially spoke in tongues whilst washing up, and one person made the conscious decision to pray in tongues as he rode his bike down the town High Street<sup>12</sup>. Since the birth of the Charismatic Movement, stories have continued to circulate of people speaking in tongues which were understood by a foreigner who was present and consisted of blasphemy against God. Harper describes such talk as unsubstantiated tales with many variations, which are based upon prejudice and can serve no purpose<sup>13</sup>. To be fair, one must also mention the other side of this particular coin, where non-Christians present at a meeting have heard the Christian gospel explained to them in their own language by tongue speakers and have been converted as a result.

Speaking in tongues is sometimes manifested in song, and this is known as "singing in the Spirit". It is a spontaneous singing of worship and praise which is mostly harmony rather than melody. The individual contributions form a harmony of sound which often contains such intricate detail and beauty that the listener finds it intensely moving. Sometimes people will sing a specific tune of an English song in tongues, using the tune as a structure from which to be more creative in their worship. The belief is that the Holy Spirit inspires each individual participating and blends it together in a perfect whole. It frequently happens that participants draw their individual contributions to an apparently natural conclusion simultaneously, and this certainly gives the impression of an unseen conductor. Peter Hocken comments on the phenomenon of singing in

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10. op.cit.8. pp.81-82.

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11. Michael Harper: None Can Guess. Hodder and Stoughton. 1971. p.55.

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12. Interviews with members of a house church. July 1980.

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13. op.cit.8. p.93.



tongues as follows:

"Corporate singing in tongues allows for an overall harmony to be formed out of the spontaneous song of each contributor. This form of prayer can be a vivid illustration of the unity of the Body of Christ, within which each member plays his distinctive part and so contributes to the rich harmony of the whole, and is often the feature in pentecostal worship that makes most impact upon the first time visitor." <sup>14</sup>

Occasional mention is also found of a 'written tongue'. This appears to be a form of automatic writing, which, as in the case of the spoken tongue, is unintelligible to the writer. Such instances are, however, too infrequent and obscure to have aroused comment from within the movement <sup>15</sup>.

It is not uncommon to find step-by-step instruction to help the Christian to begin speaking in tongues. Accusations of crude methodology have been levelled against the movement, and non-participants have understandably voiced their objections on occasions when people have been encouraged to cough or clear their throats to prepare the way for tongue-speaking, or else to repeat sounds or syllables persistently until they break through into tongues. People within the movement have been equally horrified at such practices, and the more usual procedure, if it can be called such, is to encourage a person to speak out and make sounds that are not english in the confidence that the Holy Spirit will form these into a 'tongue'. This is the procedure which is followed in the Life In The Spirit Seminars, which attach great importance to the reception of this gift. Whilst emphasising that:

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14. Peter Hocken: op.cit.5. p.31.

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15. Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan briefly quote from one person's description of how they yielded to this 'gift' in Catholic Pentecostals. Paulist Press. 1969.

"No one has to 'psych himself up' or feel emotionally ready to receive the gift"

it is, nevertheless:

"... worth putting effort into encouraging a person to yield to tongues, even to run the risk of being labelled 'imbalanced'." <sup>16</sup>

The Commitment Class Notes of the Bradford House Church explain the process as follows:

"When the Spirit descends upon us, our organs of speech are stimulated to form strange words or syllables as we yield to his prompting. Our own natural words seem inadequate to praise God as we should. The Holy Spirit then leads us and encourages us (but does not force us) to speak out in tongues.

"Once we begin, we should expect the language to begin to flow naturally. We will not understand the words we are saying, nor should we expect to." <sup>17</sup>

When people have initially spoken in tongues, it seems that the majority are able to exercise the gift at will, although some people do say they are unable to do this and need a specific 'anointing' or inspiration each time. The purpose and benefits of tongue-speaking are frequently expounded, and Clark H. Pinnock writes that Scripture speaks of three areas for which tongues has meaning and significance. These are the areas of one's relationship to God, one's relationship to the Church and within one's own Christian life. Tongues should be esteemed as a gift which allows one to pray more effectively, and he disagrees with F.D. Bruner's opinion that

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16. Life In The Spirit Seminars Team Manual. Servant Books. 1979. pp.142-143.

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17. Belonging To An Anointed Body. Church House, North Parade, Bradford. pp.16-17.

the desire to speak in tongues represents 'a passion for certainty' on the part of pentecostals as a whole<sup>18</sup>.

A Renewal Study Section emphasises the function of tongues in one's relationship to God, stating that although tongues does not have intellectual content, it is valid as a communication with God. Scripture is understood to indicate that when a Christian speaks in tongues, he is offering praise to God for His mighty deeds in Christ. The formulated conceptual praise of the mind is indispensable, but alongside this there is also a release of the Spirit - of the deep inner core of the personality - in an overflow of spontaneous and loving thanksgiving to God. The gift of tongues is beneficial to the speaker, for it releases him in praise at a level of his personality that often needs liberation. The disciple Peter is cited as an example of a person who lacked a depth of subconscious surrender to support his conviction of mind and decision of will, and for whom - at Pentecost - tongues was the sign that this part of his personality was now released for and submitted to Christ. To express this in another way, the Holy Spirit will bring the speaker in tongues into the balance of his personality, with reference to the "sound mind" of the authorized version's translation of 2 Tim.ch.1.v.7<sup>19</sup>.

The value of the gift of tongues within the individual's Christian life is to be found in its use in private edification. Tongues enables a Christian to express what he is unable to express by means of his own native tongue and he is strengthened as a result. However, if, as many tongue-speakers claim, their tongue is another human language and therefore somebody else's native tongue, why should they be able to find more profound expression in that language than in their own? People have perhaps been too quick to presume that their own tongue is an occurrence of

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18. C.H. Pinnock: "An Evangelical Theology of the Charismatic Renewal". Theological Renewal No.7. Oct/Nov. 1977. p.30..

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19. Tom Smail: "The Question Of Tongues" (Renewal Study Section). Renewal No.56. April/May 1975.

xenoglossa, and this matter deserves more thoughtful consideration.

Many people state that speaking in tongues may be used as a weapon against satanic attack, in which case the Holy Spirit provides the words to pray against the evil force or to rebuke it in Jesus's name. Michael Harper also likens the gift of tongues to a sacrament, in the sense that it is an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace<sup>20</sup>. Francis MacNutt has found tongues of value in his healing ministry when he has been unsure how best to pray for a person:

"I just pray in tongues with the idea that the Spirit will pray through me for whatever is best."<sup>21</sup>

And Michael Scanlon states that tongues may be used by a priest in hearing confession in order to ask for what is needed beyond his limited knowledge<sup>22</sup>. Although tongues is normally a gift for the individual and only indirectly for the church in that it strengthens and edifies the individual members, it may be of direct benefit to the Church when it is manifested with the gift of interpretation in the form of prophecy. Charismatics do not appear to ask the question why, if an interpretation of tongues is a prophecy, the original was not in the language of the majority present in the first place. Moreover, if speaking in tongues is a God-directed manifestation, as is frequently stated, it is confusing to find an interpretation of tongues considered equivalent to prophecy, which is a manifestation from God to Man. The implication is that the gift has undergone a change in value, and an explanation of this is wanting. Kenneth Kinghorn has correctly stated that the Bible speaks of utterances in tongues, but not of messages in tongues, and he concludes that:

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20. op.cit.7. pp.21-23.

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21. Francis MacNutt: The Power To Heal. Ava Maria Press. 1977. p.56.

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22. Michael Scanlan: The Power In Penance. Ava Maria Press. 1972. pp.49-50.

"Any interpretation which purports to be a message from God to man is, from the biblical standpoint, highly suspect. Any interpretation of a tongue, if it is to accord with Scripture, should interpret the utterance in tongues in terms of a prayer or words of praise or thanksgiving to God." <sup>23</sup>

Some people have been critical of any emphasis upon speaking in tongues on the grounds that the apostle Paul disparages tongues in his first letter to the Corinthians. However, states Renewal, what Paul is in fact doing, if 1 Cor.ch.14 is read thoughtfully, is seeking to put the gift of tongues in proportion to the other gifts. Whilst criticising its use for self-display, and the over-emphasis and abuse of the gift in Corinth, he actually values its proper use, as verses 39, 4, 5, and 18 show<sup>24</sup>. It has not always been clear, however, whether tongue-speakers believe their gift to be the same as the speaking in tongues that occurred at Pentecost or as that which was experienced in the Corinthian church. In general, it is believed that the tongues of the Corinthian correspondence could not be directly understood by those who heard them so that interpretation was necessary, and it is this exercise of the gift which is held to be most common today. The technical term 'glossolalia' is accurately applied to this. But Acts ch.2 is by no means purported to be unique, and people have described many modern instances, frequently occurring at occasions of special opportunity or crisis, where someone has heard a tongue and recognised the language being spoken<sup>25</sup>. This phenomenon is called

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23. Kenneth Cain Kinghorn: Gifts of the Spirit. Abingdon Press. 1976. pp.103-104.

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24. op.cit.19.

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25. A letter in Renewal serves as an example of such an instance. The reader tells of a Fountain Trust meeting at which a person praying in tongues (later interpreted) spoke in a Portugese dialect which was recognised by somebody present. See letter "Tongues is recognised language". Renewal No.40. Aug/Sept.1972. p.20.

xenoglossa, and it is felt that although this 'miracle' of Pentecost may occur today, it is not the main use or operation of the gift of tongues. In the earlier years of the Charismatic Movement, people's attention was centred on the events of Pentecost, and they perhaps naturally assumed that their 'tongue' was actually a human language. But this assumption is less common now.

One of the questions most frequently raised concerning speaking in tongues is whether this gift is necessary evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. With few exceptions, most Neo-Pentecostals have moved away from the Classical Pentecostal position of requiring speaking in tongues as proof of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. The theology of the Catholic charismatics finds this position particularly unacceptable, for it holds that every baptized person has received the Spirit - and comparatively few of these speak in tongues. Eric Houffe stated categorically in Renewal in 1971 that:

"It appears from the Scriptures that everyone baptized in the Holy Spirit is able to receive the gift of 'a tongue'. It may be received with the baptism or it may be received later, but it is always available to anyone who has received 'the promise of the Father'." <sup>26</sup>

However, more recently, contributors to Renewal have firmly repudiated teaching that tongues is the necessary initial evidence, stating that it lacks New Testament foundation. Moreover, contemporary evidence has shown that many people know the release of the Spirit in their lives and do not speak in tongues. Experience and Scripture thus agree <sup>27</sup>. This issue again illustrates the tendency of the movement to become less dogmatic in its teaching and to allow for a wider variety of experience. In his 1964

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26. Eric Houffe: "Tongues a personal gift". Renewal No.31. Feb/March 1971. p.23.

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27. op.cit.19.

publication, for example, Michael Harper is very near the stance of Classical Pentecostalism:

"This sign seems to have been in the early Church the normal accompaniment of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, and in this sense can correctly be called the sign of this blessing.

"As our prayer is answered and we are filled with the Holy Spirit, so we should begin to speak in tongues as the Spirit gives us utterance." <sup>28</sup>

However, by 1974 he does not seem quite so sure:

"We cannot say it always happened in the New Testament, any more than we can say it about people today. Nevertheless many are finding this gift a helpful way of expressing their love and faith at the moment when they ask for the blessing of the Holy Spirit's release and filling." <sup>29</sup> (his italics)

Whilst a minority of participants retain the emphasis that 'something is missing in your spiritual life if you have received the Holy Spirit yet have not spoken in tongues', the majority have taken one of two courses in their rejection of the Classical Pentecostal position. The first of these is to reduce considerably any emphasis they had placed upon speaking in tongues, and the result of this has often been the very rare manifestation, or even the virtual disappearance, of the gift in public, although many have continued to exercise it in private. The second course is taken in particular by many of the house churches and also by some Catholic charismatics, and this involves making a delicate distinction between

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28. Michael Harper: Power For The Body of Christ. Fountain Trust. 1964. p.34.

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29. Michael Harper: Glory In The Church. Hodder and Stoughton. 1974. pp.41-42.

tongues as the evidence of baptism in the Spirit and as the consequence of baptism in the Spirit. This distinction underlines both their rejection of the Classical Pentecostal doctrine and their co-existent belief that the gift is available to all and should naturally be appropriated. Gerald Coates and Hugh Thompson have articulated this position in Not Under Law:

"God grants the ability to speak with tongues as the blessed consequence of baptism in the Spirit and not as dogmatic evidence." <sup>30</sup> (their italics)

The Commitment Class Notes used in the Bradford circle deal with the matter as follows:

"Must one speak in tongues? That is the wrong question? You do not have to speak in tongues, but when the Lord baptizes you in the Holy Spirit you can do, and will do, provided you do not let prejudice and fear hinder the flow of the Spirit." <sup>31</sup>

This distinction between evidence and consequence is a very fine one indeed. Whilst sounding plausible in theory, it is debatable what practical difference it makes when a person is still encouraged to expect to speak in tongues at or following their baptism in the Spirit. Although it is not the doctrine of tongues as initial evidence in its classical form, in effect it is merely the same thing in another guise <sup>32</sup>. The people

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30. Gerald Coates and Hugh Thompson: Not Under Law. Private publication.

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31. op.cit.17. p.16.

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32. The common Classical Pentecostal belief that the outbreak of charismatic phenomena in this century heralds a new revival can be compared with some spheres of Neo-Pentecostalism which have understood the phenomenon of speaking in tongues as a mark of revival. See J. Watson: "Teaching weekend follows big meeting". Renewal No.2. March/April 1966, who follows the teaching of Arthur Wallis.



who occupy this position believe that speaking in tongues is a gift for every Christian once they have been baptized in the Spirit. The implication is that it is so beneficial that it is essential to the Christian, and one who does not practise it misses out on something that God wishes them to have. The result has much in common with the Catholic theological approach: every Christian has the gift in that it is actually there and ready for use, but not all practise it. Those participants who do not believe that speaking in tongues is the consequence of baptism in the Spirit naturally disagree here.

Tongue-speakers have rarely been over-defensive when attacked by their critics, and indeed they show a marked restraint in the face of what have frequently been highly charged attacks. In response to the criticism that tongues is divisive, that many fine Christians have gone to pieces morally when caught up in the "Tongues Movement", and that many have suffered serious nervous, emotional or mental breakdowns, Harper is very restrained in an early editorial of Renewal. Whilst denying these false accusations in their generalizations, and warning "concerning the awesome unforgiveable sin" of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, he states that time must not be wasted in self-defence and that the response should be one of self-examination and, if necessary, repentance<sup>33</sup>. There is general agreement in the Charismatic Movement that speaking in tongues is open to abuse, and one finds repeated emphasis upon the necessity of the careful and responsible use of this gift. Larry Christenson acknowledges that there has often been over-emphasis of tongues, but explains:

"It can be a deeply moving experience, opening up new spiritual horizons, and results in eagerness to share with others. The answer to this is wise and understanding pastoral guidance."<sup>34</sup>

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33. Michael Harper: editorial ("The accusers"). Renewal No.5. Sept/Oct. 1966.

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34. Larry Christenson: "Speaking in tongues. The problem of over-emphasis". Renewal No.17. Oct/Nov.1968. pp.9-10.

Elsewhere he points out that the cure for abuse is not disuse but proper use,<sup>35</sup> and Kilian McDonnell seeks to place the gift within its context:

"... if one approaches the topic as a theologian, one would situate the gift of tongues in the much larger theological context of the nature of the Christian life and ministry. Tongues is still there but it then assumes a very modest and lowly place. Instead of being the distinguishing mark of a certain kind or degree of Christian, it is simply a minor part of the total Christian life ..."<sup>36</sup>

Debate and investigation to determine whether speaking in tongues may consist of human languages has fascinated many, although it is not a matter of central concern to many participants in the Charismatic Movement. If objective investigation has been somewhat lacking, the difficulties involved in obtaining objective and verifiable information are certainly daunting. The linguistic study of glossolalia by the Canadian William J. Samarin is noteworthy in this respect. He describes his approach as 'sociolinguistic', and his thorough linguistic analysis of taped glossolalia leads him to the following conclusions:

"There is no mystery about glossolalia. Tape-recorded samples are easy to obtain and to analyze. They always turn out to be the same thing: strings of syllables, made up of sounds taken from among all those that the speaker knows, put together more or less haphazardly but which nevertheless emerge as word-like and sentence-like units because of realistic, language-like rhythm and melody. Glossolalia is indeed like language in some ways, but this is only because the speaker (unconsciously) wants it to

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35. Larry Christenson: Speaking In Tongues: A Gift For The Body Of Christ. Fountain Trust. 1964. p.2.

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36. Kilian McDonnell: Charismatic Renewal and the Churches. Seabury Press. 1976. p.2.

be like language. Yet in spite of superficial similarities, glossolalia is fundamentally not language. All specimens of glossolalia that have ever been studied have produced no features that would even suggest that they reflect some kind of communicative system." <sup>37</sup> (his italics)

Samarin rules out the possibility of any occurrence of xenoglossa because it has never been scientifically proven and also because "people just do not talk languages they are unfamiliar with". Whilst disagreeing with his presupposition here, charismatics are increasingly coming to the view that glossolalia is not human language, and over the years there has been less insistence that glossolalia consists of foreign languages. Consider the thoughtful conclusion of Francis Sullivan:

"Except in exceptional circumstances, it is not a foreign language ... There are lots of testimonies of recognised language by somebody there. I don't a priori rule out the veracity of people who've given such testimonies. No such instance has ever yet been recorded, verified by scientific investigators. But we can't rule out that God can and might work in that way. But we can't say that tongues are normally real foreign languages because all the evidence is contrary to that. Tongue speech has been studied or analysed by scientific investigators and all decide it is language-like speech, but isn't language. This is not because we can't identify it, but tongue speech does not show the basic characteristics of language at all. It is not surprising that many people who have this gift think it is a real language. Any language is a systematic code, tying words to realities. If it's real language it can be decoded because it's a code. There is no system to glossolalia. We must accept the judgement of the expert here." <sup>38</sup>

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37. William J. Samarin: Tongues of Men and Angels: The Religious Language of Pentecostalism. MacMillan. 1972.

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38. Francis Sullivan in taped talk on "The Gift of Tongues". Hawkstone Hall. (Undated.)

He does, however, point out that if one takes language in the broader sense as any means, vocal or other, of expressing and communicating feeling or thought, then glossolalia can be described as a language in the same manner in which one speaks of the language of music, of painting, or of dance. In an analogous sense, tongues is a language of prayer and praise because it can be expressive of and communicative of the speaker's internal attitude and prayer. Speaking in tongues is thus a form of non-linguistic, but communicative behaviour. In connection with this we may note an article in Theological Renewal which discusses the relationship between poetry and glossolalia, suggesting as a common factor to the two that both are an expression of praise beyond the range of ordinary speech. In both, meaning may be secondary and there may be a search for communication beyond thought, a tendency towards form, sound and immediacy. A further possible connection between poetry and tongues is that poetry is a private and personal art, primarily to be enjoyed alone, though capable of being shared with a group, whilst speaking in tongues is also private and personal as an act of praise. It is complete in itself, but may be shared by interpretation in the fellowship of the congregation. The writer of the article considers that nonsense has an important and legitimate part to play in expression, and he gives examples of supra-rational poetry by Blake, Milton, Hopkins and Dylan Thomas, concluding that:

"There is in this kind of poetry an abandon, an exuberance, which bursts the bounds of rational and conventional utterance; and this is also true of tongues." <sup>39</sup>

Certainly this consideration of speaking in tongues in the wider context of communicative behaviour seems a valid approach. The observations of Kilian McDonnell are once again indicative of insight and careful consideration:

"The theologian cannot tie his evaluation of tongues as a gift to the verification or non-verification of the utterance as a true language. From a purely theological point of view the question

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39. S. Baynes: "Poetry and the gift of tongues". Theological Renewal No.12. June 1979. pp.8-17.

is interesting, but basically irrelevant. Tongues is essentially a prayer gift, and a theological evaluation is placed on its prayer value (1 Cor.ch.12.vv.14,16), not on its being a true language. Persons who have this gift often say that they are able to pray at a deeper level by using tongues, than by not using tongues. This is the issue for a theologian. He can take this stand because tongues is not meant primarily as a means of communicating messages from God to individual persons or communities. It is essentially the means by which a person engages in the prayer of praise, usually in private. What language is being used is theologically irrelevant and therefore not the primary focus of the theologian." <sup>40</sup>

There is not complete agreement within the Charismatic Movement as to whether speech in tongues is a natural ability or an entirely new faculty endowed by the Holy Spirit and given a new function. Some understand tongues as a human faculty which yields to divine direction in a fusion of the natural and the supernatural. In this view, speaking in tongues, like the other charismatic gifts, presupposes a natural endowment and capacity. Other people believe that speaking in tongues is a new ability which is completely different from a natural faculty, and they tend to view the gift as miraculous. Such people tend to regard the studies and conclusions of people like Samarin as simply wrong, or else conducted by people who are blind to the workings of the Holy Spirit. However, once again, there has been a growing concensus that speech in tongues is indeed a natural human faculty, and Samarin's study has been influential in this respect. In addition, Catholic charismatics find a theological context for this view in their church's distinction between something which is miraculous quod substantium, that is, miraculous in a radical and essential way, and something which is miraculous quoad modum, that is, miraculous only in the manner in which something operates <sup>41</sup>. McDonnell is representative of

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40. op.cit.36. pp.10-11.

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41. This distinction is applied to speaking in tongues in The Malines Document, Theological and Pastoral Orientations on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Word of Life. 1974. pp.50-51.

Catholic charismatics and of many Protestant charismatics in his disagreement with the exaggerated supernaturalism of what he terms the 'zap' theory of the gifts:

"There is theologically no reason why a certain ability cannot be both a 'natural' ability and a gift of the Spirit. It is the author's contention that tongues is learned behaviour in the sense that it is something everyone is capable of doing, is a 'natural' ability, and the person uses the phonetic material already in his linguistic treasury." <sup>42</sup>

Samarin has described glossolalia as a very natural phenomenon and he goes on to say:

"It is similar to many other kinds of speech humans produce in more or less normal circumstances, in more or less normal psychological states. In fact, anybody can produce glossolalia if he is uninhibited and if he discovers what the 'trick' is ... " <sup>43</sup>

McDonnell broadly agrees with Samarin's conclusions, but states that the latter has wrongly concluded that because glossolalia is a natural phenomenon, it is therefore not supernatural. He notes Samarin's description of glossolalia as an artifact of religion and a sign of the sacred, and himself points out that even in not believing that a miracle has taken place, one can believe that glossolalia symbolizes God's presence<sup>44</sup>.

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42. op.cit.36. p.84.

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43. op.cit.37.

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44. op.cit.36. pp.116,119.

Psychological factors involved in tongue-speaking have been the subject of both study<sup>45</sup> and speculation. Most charismatics recognise that three sources can account for glossolalia - the Holy Spirit, demonic forces, or human psychological factors. There are all kinds of psychological reasons for any aspect of human behaviour, and it is often mistakenly assumed that merely because something may be explained psychologically it automatically follows that it is not of God. Tom Smail makes an important distinction between the psychological means by which glossolalia is initiated and the possibility of it having an exclusively psychological source, which he would dispute<sup>46</sup>. There is general agreement amongst charismatics that it is not the role of psychology to pass judgement on the authenticity of a charism, although there is not generally an over-defensive attitude towards psychological investigation. Indeed, cautions against psychological manipulation and exploitation are upheld. As already noted, the Life In The Spirit Seminars Team Manual emphasises that emotional or psychological preparation for receiving the gift of tongues is unnecessary. Donal Dorr's emphasis upon the 'letting go' aspect involved in baptism in the Spirit has been noted in a previous chapter, and he postulates that speaking in tongues can be an effective focus and a powerful symbol of letting go<sup>47</sup>. The American sociologists Luther Gerlach and Virginia Hine similarly focussed attention on glossolalia as the 'bridge-burning' act by virtue of which a recruit identifies with the members of a movement and its ideology, as over against the millions who do not<sup>48</sup>. Their case may appear convincing, but psychologist Meredith McGuire

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45. See for example: John Kildahl: The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues. Harper and Row. 1972.

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46. T.A. Smail: review. Renewal No.43. Feb/March 1973. p.34.

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47. Donal Dorr: Remove the Heart of Stone. Gill and MacMillan. 1978. p.104.

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48. Luther Gerlach and Virginia Hine: People, Power, Change. Bobbs-Merrill. 1970.

disagrees that tongues can be considered a major commitment mechanism<sup>49</sup>. This illustrates that there is by no means complete agreement amongst psychologists concerning speaking in tongues. David Christie-Murray has mentioned cryptomnesia (the recalling of material subconsciously absorbed in the past) and cryptisthesia (the faculty of acquiring subconsciously facts unknown to the outer consciousness) as mechanisms which may well have some bearing upon glossolalia<sup>50</sup>, but this is once more at best a theory. Kilian McDonnell writes that:

"Speaking in tongues does not occur apart from one's own psychological structure and history. This phenomenon has a human side, a complex of psychological mechanisms and personal history which constitute its psychological structure. In addition, speaking in tongues has a religious meaning. These two aspects, psychological structure and religious meaning in a specifically Christian sense, are distinguishable but not in such a way that one adds the Christian dimension to the human."

He correctly recognises that such an approach to the gift of speaking in tongues is in no way a denigrating of the divine<sup>51</sup>.

With the growing acceptance that tongue speech is a natural human ability has come the realization that Christian tongues may not differ phenomenologically from the verbalizations of non-Christian sects and cultures. Just as non-Christians sometimes pray, so too do they practise speaking in tongues. Michael Harper has distinguished between Christian and non-Christian tongues on the basis that firstly, the Christian is in full control of himself and does not pass into a state of trance or

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49. quoted by Kilian McDonnell, op.cit.31.

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50. op.cit.6. pp.24-5,127.

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51. op.cit.31. p.8.



unconsciousness, and secondly that for the Christian it does not involve frenzy and take-over by psychic or psychological factors. Whilst this may well suffice for differentiation between divine and demonic involvement, it does not take into account that purely human tongues may be both controlled and beneficial. Harper is clearly thinking in dualistic terms, stating that the true gift edifies and strengthens the bonds between God and His people, advancing His Kingdom, whereas the counterfeit strengthens the power of Satan over people and his kingdom of darkness<sup>52</sup>.

An interesting point which has been raised in connection with speaking in tongues, and one which has been a cause for concern in the eyes of many observers, has been that of the relationship between communication with God which can be understood, and communication by means of tongues which apparently has no intellectual content. Indeed, can there be any such relationship, and is prayer not invalid, perhaps even dangerous, when the speaker is not using his mental capacities and does not know what he is saying? Many charismatics have stated that an utterance in tongues does not go through the speaker's mind, but is channelled directly to God by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Renewal states that communication with God which does not have intellectual content is still in itself valid<sup>53</sup>, and Michael Harper explains that the mind is not used in the speaking in tongues process, but that it concentrates on Jesus instead<sup>54</sup>. He asks whether it is not natural, knowing the limitations of the human mind, that God should give a gift or ability to express fluently 'what the heart is desperately wanting to say. The desire to worship God is very real, but the bottleneck is the human mind, which cannot keep up with the desires which surge up from the innermost being. The gift of tongues enables these to be appropriately expressed, and Harper finds significance in the fact

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52. Michael Harper: Let My People Grow. Hodder and Stoughton. 1977. p.10.

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53. op.cit.19.

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54. op.cit.26. pp.41-42.

that the New Testament depicts the natural consequence of being filled with the Spirit as speaking<sup>55</sup>. Because the human mind cannot adequately express worship for God, this 'by-passing' of the mind is necessary. This does not imply either a rejection of intellectual processes or the notion that emotion and experience are more important than intellect. Rather it should be seen in terms of the magnitude and vastness of God which is beyond the capacity of the human mind to completely contain and comprehend. The observer Gerard Noel makes the following comments about tongue-speaking:

"It seems to be based on the principle, unconsciously being followed, that certain thoughts, aspirations, sentiments, etc, which the person desires to communicate to God, defy expression in ordinary, everyday words. It is perhaps something like the musician desiring to express something beautiful. He does not do so in words but in music. The charismatic pours out his heart to God and the sounds that come from his lips are something like verbal music, not to be confused with singing, since no ordinary words are used"<sup>56</sup>

And Heribert Muhlen writes:

"God is not only unknowable, he is inexpressible ... But prayer in tongues is the utterance of that which remains unutterable for all eternity ... In the prayer of tongues we surrender ourselves to God to the very depth of our humanity. For the power of speech is the most profound expression of being human."<sup>57</sup> (his italics)

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55. op.cit.7. pp.21-23.

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56. Gerard Noel: The Anatomy of the Catholic Church. Hodder and Stoughton. 1980.

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57. op.cit.1.

Goodnews states:

"Only God can adequately praise God - only God can adequately adore God - only God can adequately love God. When man aspires to do this, God in his love for man devises a way for man to co-operate with God to produce the adequate infinite, and he makes its performance subject to the will of man to think a mighty thought and make a simple sound." 58

The issue of intellectual and non-intellectual expression will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 17.

Rene Laurentin introduces a new angle on tongues. He points out that glossolalia reverses the story of Babel, and comments that the dream of an anti-Babel lies behind the Jewish traditions on the Sinai revelation and the account of the Christian Pentecost in Acts ch.2.vv.1-13, which, via those traditions, evokes Gen.ch.11.vv.1-9. He then goes on to conceive of a 'primal language' of mankind:

"Deep within us there is a nostalgia for a primal language that belongs to a lost paradise and to a golden age of childhood, whether the individual's or mankind's. We dream, too, of a universal language that would unite all peoples, and an angelic language that could express the ineffable God." 59

He notes that some compare speaking in tongues to the various levels of nonconceptual expression such as poetic and artistic expression, and to cries and other utterances used in psychotherapy as helps in attaining inner freedom. This is a comparison with all the forms of irrational or inspired language. Others regard glossolalia as an ancient, even archaic language, arising out of the archaic depths of the unconscious. This

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58. "The Language of Tongues". Goodnews No.12. Oct/Nov.1977.

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59. Rene Laurentin: Catholic Pentecostalism. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1977. pp.59-60.

assumes that man, being capable of linguistic expression, can create or re-create languages in the proper sense of this term<sup>60</sup>. Laurentin rightly points out that it makes no sense from a linguistic viewpoint to say that a speaker can express himself in a language whose meaning he does not understand. Spontaneous psychological mechanisms are not an adequate means of suddenly reinventing a language hitherto unknown to the speaker<sup>61</sup>. Tongue speaking has an aesthetic function and lifts one beyond the earthly quality of ordinary language:

"... tongue speaking is an act analogous to putting on liturgical robes and performing rituals foreign to everyday life. A person thereby rises above the profane ... The nostalgia for Latin that is to be found in some Catholic circles is largely due to Latin having been this kind of sacred language in the past. It is not accidental that tongue speaking developed in Catholicism once Latin had disappeared."<sup>62</sup>

Laurentin also speaks of the bond between the gift of tongues and the gift of tears, the latter of which is frequently referred to by Catholic charismatics and was, according to Laurentin, widespread during the period when tongues had almost disappeared. With reference to Mark ch.16.v.17 and Ezek.ch.36.v.26, he also claims that tongues gives expression to the 'New Man'. He speaks of a golden age in the past characterised by primal language, and one to come characterised by angelic language:

"In symbolic language, future and past fuse ... Tongue speaking ... reawakens a feeling both for the origins of things and for eschatology."<sup>63</sup>

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60. op.cit.59. p.72.

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61. op.cit.59. p.74.

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62. op.cit.59. p.83.

Laurentin also states that as a charismatic group becomes more mature and its interior life deepens, so tongue speaking becomes less and less prominent<sup>64</sup>. This point is of particular interest and worthy of further investigation. (Reference has already been made in a preceding chapter to the observation by Ian Petit that the use of the charismatic gifts has decreased.)

In his thorough consideration of speaking in tongues, Laurentin has raised several interesting points. One does, however, wonder whether some of these can be substantiated, and although interesting, they seem rather fanciful. His many mystical allusions are perhaps typical of the Catholic approach. Certainly, speaking in tongues will continue to provoke comment, speculation and investigation as long as this gift is commonly practised.

### C The interpretation of tongues

The gift of the interpretation of tongues is not to be confused with natural linguistic ability. It is the process inspired by the Holy Spirit by means of which words in the vernacular occur to a person to express what has just been spoken in a tongue. The initial words of the interpretation may come to mind and then be followed by additional words as the spoken interpretation proceeds. Alternatively, the interpreter may receive a general idea of what the interpretation is, and put this into words. This gift is therefore not so much the offering of a strict translation of the tongue into English, but rather takes the form of a paraphrase. Indeed, the interpretation may be longer or shorter than the actual tongue itself, simply because it is an interpretation and not a translation. Apparently, a single speech in tongues may have more than one interpretation. Douglas McBain states:

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63. op.cit.59. pp.79-82.

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64. op.cit.59. pp.93-94.

" ... just as a prophecy may have many different facets to it which will impress different people at different points, so it is with interpretation. So we should not be surprised and certainly not disturbed if one tongue is followed by a number of different interpretations in English. It may be that all of them are interpretations, or it may be that some are further prophetic words taking us a stage further forward in God's immediate revelation." <sup>65</sup>

If each interpretation has "the ring of truth" about it and can be accepted as God's word, there is no need for hesitation in accepting them. Harper notes that a person may resist the prompting of the Holy Spirit to provide an interpretation because of fear, unbelief or self-consciousness. The absence of an interpretation does not therefore necessarily mean that the tongue was not genuinely of the Holy Spirit <sup>66</sup>. As in the case of prophecy, interpretation is to be 'tested' by those present, and the test is whether what is received contradicts God's revelation in Scripture, or flatters Man rather than exalting God <sup>67</sup>.

Douglas McBain has drawn a somewhat unclear distinction between prophecy, and tongues with an interpretation. He describes the former as a direct word from God to a given situation which, unlike tongues, carries a "plus factor" which focusses one's attention and causes the message to penetrate the conscience <sup>68</sup>. But what does this imply about the nature of

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65. Douglas McBain: "Asking Them Questions (Interpretation)". Renewal No.70. Aug/Sept.1977. p.12.

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66. op.cit.7. p.12.

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67. op.cit.65.

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68. *ibid.*

an interpreted tongue? Is it an inferior form of prophecy? Charismatics have not provided any clear explanations as to why the 'message' does not come in the vernacular in the first place, and the relationship between prophecy and interpreted tongues remains unclear. It has been noted above that Kenneth Kinghorn has criticised the practice of providing 'messages in tongues', stating that as far as he is able to determine from the Bible, God does not give messages in tongues, but utterances in tongues<sup>69</sup>. This point deserves serious consideration by participants in the Charismatic Movement<sup>70</sup>.

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69. op.cit.23. pp.103-104.

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70. In his history of the development of Pentecostalism, Prudencio Damboriena has stated that the gift of interpretation of tongues was not very common at the beginning of the Pentecostal Movement, but was introduced in order to cope with the criticisms levelled against the indiscriminate and troublesome use of tongues: Tongues As Of Fire. Corpus Publications. 1969.

Chapter 9.DEMONOLOGY AND EXORCISM

In recent years, Western society has seen a marked growth of interest in the occult, and this has found expression in occult activities, seances, mediumship, witchcraft, and other practices. Films such as The Exorcist and The Omen trilogy are symptomatic of increased fascination with the occult, and literature concerned with the topic has progressed from the station bookstall and local newsagent into special Occult and Black Magic sections of major bookshops. The "Occult Explosion" has been noted as a characteristic of modern society, and the Church has found this reflected in the increasing number of pastoral situations in which it has been necessary to deal with the effects of occult activity. Various reasons are suggested for the phenomenon. Many believe that it is a reaction against a materialistic society which offers little hope for the future, and no relief from the drudgery of day-to-day existence. The excitement and thrills of occult involvement fill the void, and exploration is encouraged by the vast amount of publications which cater for this interest. In addition, the aftermath of two world wars and the closeness of death in an unpredictable and often violent world have led a supposedly atheistic society to look for meaning and experience in a realm beyond that of the physical. The upsurge of spiritualism in the past few decades bears witness to this, and many of those involved are undoubtedly participating in a genuine search for something more than precarious thrills. John Richards firmly believes that the occult explosion is the expression of a search for meaning, identity, purpose, security and reality. But although in essence perhaps a healthy reaction against materialism and technology, it is unhealthy and dangerous because it has turned away from Christian spirituality. He wonders how much the Christian Church has been responsible for such widespread involvement in the occult in its failure to declare clearly that these goals can be attained through Christ. However, states Richards, people who are able to make a misguided and dangerous religious commitment may well learn more easily to make a right commitment than the apathetic whom the Church so readily accepts<sup>1</sup>.

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1. John Richards: "The victory given". Renewal No.40. Aug/Sept. 1972. pp.31-35.



The growth of occult interest in society as a whole has been paralleled by an increase in awareness of the occult on the part of the Church. It appears that more and more people are turning to the Church for help with problems resulting from occult activity. In addition to this, however, the Charismatic Movement has been notable for its emphasis upon demonology and exorcism, and for what many people both within and outside the movement have regarded as an unhealthy and unbalanced interest and obsession with the occult. Leaving aside the extremes, there is possibly a more straightforward explanation for this than has been commonly recognised. For many people, a charismatic experience is their first introduction to the reality of the spiritual realm, and their growing sensitivity to the divine spirit is coupled with an increasing awareness of evil forces. Their new perception of that which is evil is thus a development that is to be expected. Many Christians are also of the opinion that when the Holy Spirit becomes more active in a person's life, the devil will retaliate by becoming more active there himself, this constituting a further factor in explaining the movement's awareness of the demonic.

The preoccupation with demons that is evident in some participants in the Charismatic Movement has given rise to much criticism and caution against a one-sidedness which neglects angelology and traces every unusual condition or misfortune to the work of demons. John Richards speaks of a greater extremism which literally sees demons everywhere, even in everyday mishaps such as missing buses or losing keys. Everything which is not obviously directly from God is thus labelled as demonic, and the activity of demons is used to explain what are simply cases of human weakness and lack of discipline. Richards comments:

"It is possibly an inevitable swing of the pendulum from a position held by the majority, but the sooner the pendulum stops swinging the better."<sup>2</sup>

One of the most disturbing aspects of this approach is its dualism.

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2. John Richards: "Spirit of evil?" Renewal No.75. June/July 1978. p.24

Everything is regarded as being either "of God" or "of Satan", and no room is allowed for human factors, with the result that satanic activity becomes a scapegoat and the human being is absolved from responsibility. The dualistic position takes little account of developments in the study of human behaviour and is incompatible with much psychiatric and psychological methodology. Michael Harper has correctly pointed out that a balanced study of the New Testament shows that the majority of pastoral problems faced by the early Christians were directly attributable not to evil spirits but to human factors such as pride, lust, jealousy and gluttony. Whilst the devil may well take advantage of human weakness, it is quite another matter to say that he is directly responsible for it, and the answer in most cases for the New Testament Christians lay in the area of the confession of sin rather than the casting out of spirits. In Harper's opinion, there is no reason to believe that it should be otherwise today<sup>3</sup>. John Richards finds it significant that spirit-terminology and talk of demons is strongest amongst those Christians who do not regularly encourage specific confession and forgiveness of sins. Thus "the spirit of evil" is usually little more than sin that has not been dealt with and has become habit. The bondage is then basically to the 'lower nature' rather than to any alleged take-over by evil spirits. He too emphasises that the first item for spiritual warfare is discipline and the establishment of orderliness in a Christian's life, and notes that it is this order which Paul follows in Eph.chs.4-6, before talking about God's armour for battle. Weapons, he believes, are a menace rather than a benefit to an undisciplined soldier, and it is not a demonology but a Christology that is needed for dealing with the evil spirits that are genuine. He lists as examples of spirit-terminology which he has heard, "the spirit of asthma", "the spirit of lust", and even "the spirit of Anglicanism"<sup>4</sup>.

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3. Michael Harper: This Is The Day. Hodder and Stoughton. 1979. pp.90-91.

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4. op.cit.2. pp25-27.

There are further theological implications of a dualistic demonology. Christ's victory over the demonic powers is brought into question when the Christian is portrayed as being at the mercy of evil forces, and His supremacy as Creator and Lord is compromised. Furthermore, when the blame is placed upon demons, Man's God-given freedom of choice is denied, and one is left with the impression that he is like a robot, at the dictates of either good or evil. This in turn calls into question the Fall of Man and the redemptive work of Christ, because one is lead to infer that Man is basically good, but not living as such because he is at the mercy of evil forces beyond his, and possibly even God's, control<sup>5</sup>. Such faulty theology has characterised some of the thought of the Charismatic Movement in this area, and has brought it into disrepute. However, much careful and balanced consideration has also been in evidence, and this can be found in both denominational and house church circles, where a serious yet proportionate attitude now prevails with attention being centred instead upon the Lordship of Christ. As well as the sensationalist literature, some outstanding practical writings on demonology and exorcism have been produced within the Charismatic Movement. Particularly noteworthy is John Richard's book, But Deliver Us From Evil<sup>6</sup> and the National Service Committee sponsored booklet The Ministry of Deliverance in the Catholic Tradition<sup>7</sup> by James McManus, which both present a sensible, well-informed treatment of the topic.

One finds within the Charismatic Movement frequent reference to "the deliverance ministry", as opposed to the ministry of exorcism. This is because exorcism is increasingly viewed within the context of a wider ministry which includes physical and inner healing. Seen in this context, the sensationalism of demon possession and exorcism is toned down, and the

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5. John Richards has recognised these points in op.cit.2.

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6. John Richards: But Deliver Us From Evil. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1974.

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7. James McManus: The Ministry of Deliverance in the Catholic Tradition. National Service Committee. 1980.

role of the Church in a continuous healing process becomes central. John Richards states that the ministry of deliverance is but one of the many aspects of the Gospel, and a small part of what is technically called the Church's ministry of healing. He stresses the importance of attention to the practicalities of a person's needs and of a lasting fellowship following an isolated act of deliverance. Responsibility and discipline in speaking or writing about exorcism and dealing with 'harmless' occult practices and the language of superstition is essential. He believes that many people involved in the occult are not anti-Christian, but pre-Christian. This situation thus brings a new meaningfulness to the Church, its Scriptures, teaching and sacraments, and its nature as God's healing community, and Richards warns:

"Those from the darker paths of occultism will have been used to giving their all, and a watered-down Christianity will neither attract them nor offer them much security." <sup>8</sup> (his italics)

Examples of exorcism can be found in much charismatic literature. Michael Harper describes several instances from his own experience, including a man who reacted to prayer by making the noises of farmyard animals<sup>9</sup>, a more straightforward case of a girl who requested prayer for baptism in the Spirit<sup>10</sup>, a woman in a meeting at a church<sup>11</sup>, and an ordained minister who growled like a dog when the Holy Spirit made the evil power demonstrate its presence<sup>12</sup>. Many people seem to find themselves

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8. John Richards: "The role of the local church in the ministry of deliverance". Renewal No.59. Oct/Nov. 1975. pp.17-18.

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9. Michael Harper: None Can Guess. Hodder and Stoughton. 1971. pp.139-140.

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10. *ibid*.

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11. Michael Harper: Spiritual Warfare. Hodder and Stoughton. 1970. pp.56-57.

ministering exorcism by circumstance rather than by prior intention. James McManus found that some cases he was dealing with were not responding to prayer for inner healing, and explains:

"It was then that I began to ask myself whether I was using the right form of prayer for the person ... I found myself commanding in the name of Jesus and this prayer for deliverance worked. My approach to ministry is very pragmatic. And for purely pragmatic reasons I found myself commanding whatever was molesting a penitent to depart in the name of Jesus ... No other form of prayer brought peace." 13

There has thus been a gradual rediscovery of a ministry that was commonplace in the book of Acts. Harper provides a brief history of the Church's attitude to evil forces through the centuries, showing how the Church's machinery for dealing with such gradually declined as time passed by. Very early on, the rite of exorcism had become a part of normal Christian initiation, and Harper takes this as an indication that many of the early pagan converts were contaminated by demonic powers. The Roman Catholic service of baptism has retained this exorcism rite to the present day, and the concept also flavours the Orthodox rite of baptism, which is conceived of as the dramatic snatching of a child from the clutches of Satan into the hands of Christ. In the Anglican rite of baptism, however, whilst exorcism appeared in Cranmer's 1549 Prayer Book, it disappeared soon afterwards in the wave of reactionary feeling which favoured the removal from the Prayer Book of all so-called superstitious connotations. Harper describes the Reformers as "not very charismatically inclined". He feels that in the centuries that led up to this time, superstition had taken the place of true discernment within the Church, and the sharp distinctions between the powers of God and of Satan had become blurred:

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12. op.cit.11. pp.11-12.

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13. Jim McManus in: Anointed With The Spirit. Mayhew-McCrimmon. 1978. p.50.

"... the Church seems unable to distinguish between the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the manifestations of demons. It is interesting to notice that the supposed symptoms of demon-possession and witchcraft outlined in the Rituale Romanum, which was the standard textbook on exorcism in the Middle Ages in the Western Church, include powers that aptly describe some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Indeed most of the gifts of the Spirit, outlined by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 are included!"

Although the Reformation changed all this by opposing superstition and emphasizing the place of reason, this also resulted in the rejection of the charismatic element, and whilst the age of reason called into question the whole basis of demonic activity, it could not of course eliminate it. In the present situation, Harper feels that the dominance of reason is being overthrown<sup>14</sup>, and this has opened the way for the more serious recognition and appraisal of spiritual forces that has come about in recent years. Because of the previous neglect of the topic, however, there has been something of a theological void surrounding demonology and exorcism, resulting in a discrepancy between theological provision and pastoral experience. This is reflected by John Richards in one of the introductory statements to his book:

"What follows will not fit easily into the contemporary theological sense, but I have no doubt whatever that it is, and increasingly will be, in tune with the contemporary pastoral situation."<sup>15</sup>

Whilst the disciplines of medicine, psychiatry and psychology all have a part to play in a ministry of deliverance, these are concerned mainly with secondary causes and symptoms. The importance of the theological interpretation, says Richards, cannot be over-emphasized, because it is

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14. op.cit.11. pp.36-40.

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15. op.cit.6. p.vii.

this which is best suited to give cause, meaning and purpose. The adequacy of the theological views of the ministering person is desperately important, for his action, or inaction, will depend upon them. Richards feels that the terminology is in itself immaterial, whereas the healing of the person is not. He holds the view that the task of the theologian is to comment upon and interpret Christian experience, and to hold doctrines of God, man, and God's creation in which all that is real can find a place<sup>16</sup>. This would undoubtedly be echoed by many Christians, whose experience of theology has found it remote and divorced from the realities of human experience.

Various areas of satanic attack are recognised by charismatics. Several writers have reproved Christians for their use of superstitious practices and expressions, and for the fact that their lives are often considerably influenced by ungodly things such as social status, ambition, or wealth. This may open one to indirect satanic attack. Michael Harper defines a number of specific 'battle areas'<sup>17</sup>, and the first of these is the physical. He reasons that if the physical body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, then it will also be a target for Satan. After describing the case of a man who was born blind because of the entry of an evil spirit at birth, he states that far more illness is caused by the sin of others than is often realised. Furthermore, the person who is affected may be an innocent party. Hugh Thompson concurs with this in Restoration, writing that unclean spirits may cling to those born out of wedlock<sup>18</sup>. The second area listed by Harper is that of the moral, a much more obvious and well-known area of attack in which Satan frequently tempts Christians to break God's moral laws and so bring dishonour on the name of Christ. It is interesting to find that in the field of theology too, "demonic powers are

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16. op.cit.6. pp.114-118.

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17. op.cit.11. pp.95-107.

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18. Hugh Thompson: "Let My People Go". Restoration. Nov/Dec. 1980. pp.14-15.

bound to be felt". Referring to 1 Tim.ch.4.v.1, Harper feels it may well be that many of the destructive heresies that have arisen throughout Church history as well as those of the present:

"... were not the invention of man at all, but the product of demonic influences."

He elaborates this statement as follows:

"This (area) is a happy hunting ground for Satan, for one least expects to find a demon in the respectable confines of a theological college, or the intellectual cut and thrust of refined theological debate. And those who are dominated by purely rational considerations will not readily accept, let alone attempt to deal with, such irrational notions as demonised theological opinions."

In the extreme cases of some of the modern cults, occult and spiritistic origins can be directly traced, but Harper suggests that demonic influence in contemporary theology is more subtle and less obviously detectable. He feels that error and heresy should be viewed from this new angle, as should fanaticism. A further area in which there may be satanic attack is that of the psychological, but Harper realizes the complexity of this sphere and cautions against over-simplifying and attributing all factors to evil sources. There may also be satanic influence in the psychical. The case of the slave girl in Acts ch.16 is cited to show that a capacity which has been used by Satan can never be used by God, although a new gift of similar nature but divine origin may well be bestowed in some cases. Harper believes that satanic power can infiltrate buildings and rooms, creating an unholy and disturbing influence. Churches especially are a battle area in this respect, and the exorcising of the affected place is necessary. Then referring again to the affliction of the innocent, Harper devotes several paragraphs to the satanic attack of children. Describing a case in which two children were affected by an evil influence and prayer made over them whilst they slept was successful in cutting off this influence, he states that prayer during sleep for young children is possible because they are the innocent victims of the sins of others:



"Children are particularly vulnerable to all kinds of experiences and pressures. There is no reason to think that they are free from enemy attacks, in fact in many ways they are more open, and need very much the protection of the believing prayers of their parents ... Taught properly, young children have a surprisingly mature grasp and appreciation of spiritual truth, and will at a very tender age understand the nature of spiritual warfare. They can profitably be shown how to recognise and overcome the attacks of Satan without fear."

Harper presents his treatment of the whole issue of satanic attack with clarity and care. In addition, we may note the point made by Arthur Wallis that Satan may well counterfeit the actual gifts of the Holy Spirit:

"... the presence of the counterfeit is an unanswerable argument for the presence of the real. He would be a prize fool who forged a currency no longer in circulation - and Satan is no fool." <sup>19</sup>

Harper believes that many of the important stages in the spiritual lives of Christians are anticipated or followed by satanic attacks. This was strikingly true in the experience of Jesus, and he feels that the temptations of Jesus can be paralleled in the lives of Christians entering into charismatic experience. This is of particular interest, showing as it does the key nature of the charismatic experience in the eyes of participants in the movement, and the awareness that disillusionment and other problems are frequently encountered by people following their initial baptism in the Spirit or speaking with tongues. The first temptation which Jesus faced was directed at His faith, and Harper has frequently heard of people who have been 'filled with the Holy Spirit' and then doubted the reality of what had happened. This parallels the first temptation of Jesus. Harper states that there is nearly always a satanic challenge when a Christian first begins to exercise the gift of tongues, many falling to

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19. Arthur Wallis: "The real and the counterfeit". Renewal No.8. April/May 1967. pp.6-10.

temptation to unbelief where tongues is concerned:

"It may well be that whereas our first manifesting of this gift was accompanied by some excitement and emotion, when we come to exercise it the next day, it appears flat and cold. This is Satan's opportunity."

The second temptation of Jesus involved self-gratification, and charismatics are subject to this temptation in the performing of miracles for their own ends. Authoritative prayer for healing may be made in order to enhance the individual's reputation, and such subtle sins, although they may be mixed with pure motives, need to be confessed and cleansed. The third temptation faced by Jesus was to self-display. Once again, the charismatic is susceptible in that he may be tempted to dramatise or exaggerate his blessings. Harper adds a word of warning here about personal testimonies, which provide a potent source of temptation to exaggeration or even complete fabrication. He suggests that 2 Cor.ch.12.v.4 might be taken in some cases as an indication that Christians should keep their experiences to themselves. An interesting factor in the above is the apparent lack of distinction between temptation caused by satanic activity, and temptation inherent in Man's sinful nature. Even though it is very often recognised that the two may interact, it is too often assumed by charismatics that their temptations or problems are primarily of satanic rather than human origin. Within the context of satanic temptation, Harper also warns of mistaking Satan's deceptions for God's guidance. This reflects concern over an area in which the Charismatic Movement has known considerable confusion and error. Emphasising that guidance usually comes when a Christian has spent time waiting before God and testing the apparent leadings, he advises a wariness of sudden impulses to do anything, especially those which appear unreasonable or even ridiculous. The practice of forsaking normal safety precautions in the belief that God will protect without such aids is also seen as a temptation, and in connection with this, Harper is wary of those who believe in selling all they have and living by faith. He comments that sadly such people are often living on other people's faith<sup>20</sup>.

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20. Michael Harper: Walk In The Spirit. Hodder and Stoughton. 1968. pp.25-32.

It is clear that participants in the movement generally believe that the charismatic will know more of satanic attack than will the non-charismatic. This is because the charismatic is assumed to be more aware of spiritual realities, and, in spite of vigorous denials, the implication of a first class and second class Christianity is unavoidable. In the reality of spiritual warfare the charismatic is apparently at an advantage:

"... nothing but our complete surrender to the full blessing of the Holy Spirit will enable us to make any impressive impact upon Satan's kingdom of darkness. We are only scratching the surface. Satan laughs at us." <sup>21</sup>

This was written in one of his earlier publications (1964), and one wonders how Paul's instructions of Eph.ch.6.vv.13-18 fit into this. These instructions list weapons for spiritual warfare which are available to every Christian, and not just primarily to those who have had the most vivid charismatic experience.

Several writers distinguish between various degrees or categories of satanic attack. James McManus defines a number of terms used in the Catholic tradition to describe demonic attack in the life of an individual. The first of these is possession, in which the devil enters the physical body, and operates by using its faculties and by producing unusual and uncharacteristic acts. Such a condition is apparently rare. Then secondly, the term obsession describes satanic attack upon the person from outside their body, a state which does not involve actual possession but is accompanied by strong temptation. McManus notes that because this term can be confused too easily with psychological obsession, many contemporary writers prefer to use the term oppression in its place. This may be used to describe any activity of the devil between possession and temptation, and here McManus quotes a definition by Robert Faricy. Whilst the satanic forces involved do not entirely deprive the victim of free choice, they

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21. Michael Harper: Power For The Body Of Christ. Fountain Trust. 1964. p.55.

exercise some degree of control over him, torment him and sometimes provide him with extraordinary powers. A grave case of oppression may be mistaken for possession, but less serious oppression, which is common, can account for the apparently compulsive element in some cases of habitual sin such as hatred, anger, resentment, gluttony or lust. The term infestation has traditionally implied possession, but McManus notes that some contemporary writers prefer to use this term to denote a state of demonic activity which is more serious than oppression and yet less serious than possession. This is a very fine distinction and McManus seeks to clarify it by stating that whereas oppression is characterised by demonic activity from outside the person, infestation describes demonic activity that takes place within the person. The word bondage is of significance here, for a certain faculty of an individual may be in bondage without this person being actually possessed<sup>22</sup>.

John Richards uses three terms to describe demonic states, demonic influence for the mild; demonic oppression for the more serious; and demonic attack for the more acute. He feels that these are appropriate for the following reasons: the term influence is not so limited as temptation; oppression is a word naturally used by the people themselves to describe their state, and it avoids the psychiatric term obsession; and the term attack avoids possession and is advantageous in its suggestion that the state is not permanent, and has no moral stigma. He lists the symptoms which provide evidence of the more serious form, acute demonic attack. A change of personality may be noticed, resulting in changes of intelligence, character, demeanour and appearance, and these may be accompanied by physical changes, such as preternatural strength, epileptiform convulsions, foaming, catatonic symptoms, clouding of consciousness, anaesthesia to pain, a changed voice. Mental changes are also characteristic of this state, and in this context Richards mentions glossolalia, the understanding of unknown languages, preternatural knowledge, psychic and occult powers such as clairvoyance, telepathy and prediction. Spiritual changes may also be noticeable, and the most obvious of these are reaction to and fear of Christ, blasphemy, and effects caused by prayer. Deliverance from this

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22. op.cit.7. pp.14-15.

state is possible in the name of Jesus, but Richards acknowledges that diagnosis can only be made on this basis in retrospect and so it falls outside the range of pre-exorcism symptoms. He goes on to distinguish between true demonic possession and false demonic possession, noting that the latter is by no means necessarily unreal. It may be psychogenic in origin, that is originating in the mind, by suggestion, autosuggestion, projection, delusion, or passivity phenomena (where a person says that his thoughts, feelings, speech and actions are not his own). Medical conditions such as symptomatic epilepsy may account for the symptoms, as may the influence of another living person, for example a relation or somebody who practises occult manipulation. Another possibility is that the spiritual beings responsible may be earth-bound spirits who have attached themselves to a person either by the latter's invitation or else more or less accidentally. However, true demonic possession is a very real phenomenon in which a person may be indwelt by one or more demons, either partially or completely. The condition may be accidental, a result of heredity, connection with an affected place, occult experience and healing, occult transference, or curses. On the other hand it may have come about through conscious invitation as in Devil subscription, or unknowing invitation such as in the case of mediums<sup>23</sup>.

A distinction between demonic possession, the common experience of temptation, and a 'bondage' is made by Michael Harper. He describes the first as "an invasion and occupation", the second as "a frontal assault (or from the flank)" and the latter as "a siege or blockade". This picturesque language portrays the degree of seriousness he would ascribe to each condition. A bondage is described as a habit, way of life or wrong relationship which has got a hold on a person and does not yield to even a firm resistance. The way to deal with it is by the "loosing" (as in Mt.ch.18.v.18) of the person involved by another Christian<sup>24</sup>. A bondage

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23. op.cit.6. pp.90,156-158.

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24. op.cit.11. pp.108-109.

may arise during early childhood, when an emotional crisis results in repression, with later psychological or even physical bondage. It may be manifested in a variety of ways, such as irrational fears, shyness, indecisiveness, evil habits, depression or insomnia. Part of the necessary healing may involve the memories, for unless these are cleansed and healed they may be used by Satan to bring about bondage and may cripple part of that person's spiritual life<sup>25</sup>. The use of the word "possession" is deliberately avoided by Harper and others because it is not a strict rendering of the greek. The Bible refers to people either "having" an evil spirit, or being demonised, and the term 'possession' is deficient, states Harper, because it suggests a complete take-over of a person, whereas this is not necessarily the case with one who has an evil spirit<sup>26</sup>.

The terminology used to describe various demonic states may thus vary considerably from one writer to another. Whilst this reflects an awareness of the complexities of this field, it does on occasion cause some confusion. The inter-relationship of "bondages" and healing of the memories proposed by Harper adds to the complexities and broadens the area of satanic activity to be dealt with. In spite of cautions to the contrary, it seems that imaginary demons may be uncovered in the spheres of psychology and memories in particular.

Those writers who have most carefully researched the topic of demonology tend to make a distinction between psychic and spiritual forces. But whilst psychic forces are not to be identified in themselves with evil powers, and are neutral in this respect, they are nevertheless part of a fallen world. They may therefore be used by demonic forces and any involvement in the realm of the psychic thus puts an individual at risk by opening up the possibility of contact with the demonic.

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25. op.cit.20. pp.58-59.

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26. Michael Harper: None Can Guess. Hodder and Stoughton. 1971. pp.139-140.

John Richards spends some time considering phenomena which may be mistakenly assumed to be of demonic origin<sup>27</sup>. He notes that people and places are inextricably bound together, and mentions six causes of disturbance associated with places. These are the souls of the departed, activity of magicians, human sin, place memories, poltergeist activity and demonic interference. Of these, only the latter requires exorcism. Richards follows those who believe that the majority of 'ghosts' are in reality just 'imprints' or 'place memories', bits of 'atmospheric film' which are simply being replayed. These are quite impersonal, can cause no direct damage and are best ignored. Most of the minority of ghosts that are actually real are the souls of the recently deceased who are unable to leave their earthly habitats without some help. These ghosts are in need, and any activity is usually either a means of identification or of making their need known. Richards comments:

"It is not so much that they have 'returned', but rather that they have never left. They long to leave and find their rest in Him. Their need is for the Gospel which may be 'proclaimed' by the Eucharist (1 Cor.ch.11.v.27) and by the life of the family concerned. One Christian family successfully ministered to such a soul by giving him a nickname, and inviting him to meals and family prayers. He was soon at peace. Another departed soul used regularly to arrive in Church alone with the parson to hear the daily Morning and Evening Prayer and the Scriptures read aloud. He too met God and is at rest. Not infrequently the saying of confession on behalf of those bound by sin is appropriate." (his italics)

He regards it as a pity that the subject of praying for the dead is abhorrent to some Christians, and he distinguishes here between contacting the dead and praying for them. The Corinthians, he points out, were baptised on behalf of the dead (1 Cor.ch.15.v.29) and Christ is described as having gone to 'preach to the spirits in prison' (1 Pet.ch.3.v.11). He

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27. op.cit.6. pp. 190-212 contains the following material and a fuller treatment of this topic.

quotes from the remarks of C.E.B. Cranfield, who felt that the latter verse indicated that the interval between death and resurrection is not without significance and that in this too Christ was active in His saving work. These comments will no doubt prove controversial, not least because they challenge the standard evangelical view that death removes the opportunity to make a decision for Christ and be assured of salvation. Richards is advocating a ministry to the deceased which does not involve exorcism, but rather prayer and counselling, and this is to approach the subject from a new angle. Going on to discuss poltergeist activity, he emphasises that a spirit is not usually responsible for this, but that as far as it is understood it seems to be caused by energy which emanates from the uncontrolled psychic side of a person. It seems likely that family tensions contribute to poltergeist activity, and it is therefore more appropriate to concentrate on finding the cure in some treatment of the family's situation rather than in addressing a supposed spirit. Certain distinctions can be made between the two phenomena. Earthbound human spirits are confined to a kind of charade to make themselves and their needs know, whereas characteristic poltergeist activity is random, chaotic and mischievous. An imprint or place-memory is distinctive from both of these, in that whilst a true ghost's actions would be communicative or purposeful, this particular phenomenon has no energy to move things or cause noises. All this serves to show that it is only perhaps in a minority of cases that exorcism is the appropriate form of action to take. Richards points out that unconfessed sin is frequently the underlying factor in the psychic disturbances of which a person appears to be the victim, but is in fact the cause. Places may also suffer from a psychic 'hangover' associated with their previous usage, and this is particularly true of pagan sites.

There are therefore three different types of force which may be operating in any given place, the impersonal, the demonic, and the human, and in all these cases Richards puts prayer and the pastoral care of the persons involved first, even in those which are clearly demonic. It is obvious that correct diagnosis of the problem and the ability to distinguish between spiritual and psychic factors is of considerable importance, for this may significantly affect the treatment that is offered. Richards' counsel is therefore a very wise one.



Even where there is a comparatively clear case of demonic involvement, various categories of spirit may be involved. Hugh Thompson lists eight common categories: religious spirits, which forbid what God permits (1 Tim.ch.4.vv.1-5) [he cites as an example the church of his upbringing, which forbade speaking in tongues]; spirits of fear and rejection, which sometimes invade a life at a time of shock; unclean spirits, which encourage fantasies and immoral or perverted habits and in some cases affect children born outside marriage; "root of bitterness", usually hiding behind the symptom of hurt feelings or desperate disappointment; occult spirits; epileptic spirits; spirits causing allergies; and parental overshadowing, which may be implied in Mat.ch.1.vv.22-23<sup>28</sup>. One gains the impression from this list that Thompson is perhaps mistaking the symptoms for the cause. As has already been noted, Richards regards human overshadowing as a phenomenon which does not constitute true demonic possession, and some 'occult spirits' may rather involve the non-demonic overshadowing by somebody involved in occult manipulation. In addition, it cannot always be assumed that epilepsy is caused by demonic forces. Thompson acknowledges that the name is simply the description of what a particular demon produces in a human life, and he is hesitant about the lengthy lists of demons which have been published over the years, feeling that it is wiser and safer to keep to the few names given to spirits in Scripture. However, one feels that he may too readily ascribe certain phenomena to demonic activity, even though he does not actually suggest that every occurrence of the above symptoms is caused by demons. This is a danger which has been recognised by the Charismatic Movement, and it is one which remains a problem.

In his consideration of the Church's broader ministry of healing, Richards distinguishes between eight types of 'healer', each of which employs psychic, demonic, or divine power<sup>29</sup>. The 'magical' healer uses

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28. op.cit.18.

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29. op.cit.6. pp.7-9.

acquired or created occult power to heal and restore, and this concept is basic to white witchcraft. The mediumistic healer is a healing medium through whom actual spirits are alleged to work, many of these spirits purporting to be of departed doctors. The psychological healer differs from these two in employing a natural, if inexplicable, force which is akin to water-divining and in which healing is seen as the action of vibrations and radiation or 'odic force'. The remaining categories may all be found within the Church's ministry, the first of these being the 'consecrated', in which the healer consecrates some natural gift for God's use within a prayerful, corporate and possibly sacramental setting. The 'pastoral' is considered by Richards to be by far the greatest healing. It is rarely understood as a healing ministry, but brings wholeness at many levels by friendship, counsel, support, encouragement, prayer and spiritual direction. Presumably, this may involve either, or both, natural ability and divine empowering. Richards goes on to consider the sacramental means of healing which belong to the Church and include Holy Communion, anointing with oil, sacramental confession, and the laying on of hands. Then there is the 'charismatic' ministry exercised by someone with a specifically Spirit-given gift of healing or of miraculous powers, and finally the 'mediatory'. Whilst all healers within the Church's ministry of healing are never more than vehicles of God's grace, Richards still finds this last category necessary on the basis that a Christian may have no natural ability, charismatic gift or great pastoral gift but may still be a means by which God brings greater wholeness to others. Richards points out that this list is not conclusive, and that the categories merge. Nevertheless, it serves to illustrate how powers from different sources may operate alone or together in achieving a desired result, and how it is by no means always an easy matter to determine exactly what power is at work.

Considering the interest of the Charismatic Movement in the subject, there is surprisingly little systematic detail to be found in its more reputable writings concerning the act of exorcism. Michael Harper's treatment of the subject is therefore of particular interest<sup>30</sup>. He warns

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30. op.cit.11. pp.111-122.

against entering into places or situations without the proper safeguards, and where exorcism is necessary, he recommends working with a partner. In preparation for this ministry, personal cleansing should be sought and then the armour of God should be put on "piece by piece, leaving nothing to chance", a prayer being suggested by means of which to do this. Moreover, at this point and before praying for the person in need, Harper advises prayer in tongues if the person ministering has received this gift. The purpose behind this is the provision of edification for the task ahead. Love and gentleness in the actual ministering are necessary, and roughness and noise are not. Prior to the actual exorcism, the person seeking deliverance must show a frank recognition of sin and a willingness to give it up with God's help. This involves belief in and understanding of the Cross and the power of the blood of Jesus to cleanse. It is emphasized that the exorcism itself consists not of a prayer to God, but of a command to Satan to flee or to give up the captive he has bound:

"We must remember that we do not ask God to resist the devil, or to loose the captive; God has told us to do this, and has given us the authority to do it in the name of His son."

The words to be used will vary according to the circumstances, for there is no set formula. Satan must be bound (Mt.ch.12.v.29; ch.16.v.19; ch.18.v.18) before a person can be set free, and for this purpose Harper suggests the following prayer:

"In Jesus' name, I (or we if more than one are ministering) bind you, Satan, that you no longer exercise dominion over this person."

Here again, one does not ask God to do it, but does it directly in Jesus's authority. This is followed by a prayer for the setting free of the person, such as:

"In the name of Jesus by the power of his precious blood shed on the Cross for you personally, I take the sword of the Spirit and cut you free from bondage to (and here one names the particular bondage)."

The story of Lazarus (Jn.ch.11.v.44), in which Jesus raised Lazarus but asked others to loose him from the grave clothes is used as an illustration of the ministry in which a person who is already a Christian is set free, but one wonders how legitimate an illustration this really is.

The actual casting out of the evil spirits is now dealt with in more detail, and whilst the distinction between this and binding and loosing is relatively clear in Harper's theory, it is rather confused when he comes to describing practice. The matter of binding Satan also applies to the casting out with the purpose that the spirits should not hurt or upset a person as they leave, and a suggested 'prayer' for the exorcism proper reads:

"In the name of Jesus Christ I/we command you evil spirit (here the spirit is named) to come out of this person and never enter him/her again."

The name or nature of the evil spirit will probably have been revealed, for they usually affect a person in a particular area of life, or part of the body. Therefore the exorcist names the spirit when he commands it to leave the person. Harper warns that the practice of asking the demons for their names has no Scriptural warrant, and, furthermore, that that of carrying on a conversation with them is not only scripturally unwarranted, but also extremely dangerous:

"Jesus commanded them to be silent, for although they knew the truth all right, they were not good witnesses to it! One has even heard of people tape-recording these sessions. Evil is not something to be 'examined' or recorded for posterity. To be curious in this way is to invite Satan to trap the very ones who are seeking to be deliverers. In Acts 19 Paul saw to it that everything to do with the evil which had been practised in Ephesus was burnt, even though it was extremely valuable."

Harper considers the laying on of hands to be inappropriate for the actual casting out. Its place is in the subsequent ministry of strengthening by the in-filling of the Holy Spirit, and the healing of the delivered person

from any damage which may have been done by demonic forces. He acknowledges that in extreme cases these processes may be a struggle, with the spirits refusing to come out immediately and a protracted battle taking place. However, this should not normally happen and several reasons are suggested as to why it may sometimes occur. The person involved may not be "quite ready or willing to be delivered", in which case "the hour of full deliverance has not yet come". Otherwise, the exorcists themselves may either be the wrong persons to be involved in the ministry, or may be in need of more preparation and discernment, this possibly involving a time of prayer and fasting. The first of these reasons in particular seems somewhat inadequate, and a more detailed line of reasoning is needed. However, what Harper wishes to stress is that failure is never in the authority given to Christians in the name of Jesus:

"Sometimes these long sessions of casting out are part of the enemy's plan to tire out Christian people, while at other times, it is the person himself who is clamouring for attention of the wrong sort, or even notoriety. Of course, if our diagnosis has been wrong in the first place, and there is no evil spirit involved, then no wonder there will be nothing to show for it."

Harper feels that too much emphasis is placed on outward manifestations, such as coughing or weeping, to mark the spirit's leaving of a person. Especially if the spirits have been bound, they often leave very quietly, and there is no need for shouting or screaming, nor should this ever be suggested to the person being prayed for. Whereas one should be ready for the eventuality of screaming, as sometimes happens in the gospels, there may be no manifestation at all. Another point to note is that whilst Christians have a mandate to cast spirits out, it stops at this point, and they have no biblical grounds for telling the spirits where to go (for example, the 'lake of fire' or hell). Harper states that it is not possible to go beyond Jesus's command to them "never to enter again" (Mk.ch.9.v.25) and all that can be done is to hand them over to "the sovereign power and authority of the Lord Himself".

The aftercare of the person from whom the spirits have been cast out is important. It is essential that there should be full surrender to Christ and indwelling by Him:

"If the person we have ministered to has not received the baptism or fullness of the Holy Spirit, this may well be the right moment to tell him about it, and to pray with him. This is a time when people are very vulnerable."

They are therefore in need of empowering by the Spirit. This illustrates the fact that Harper regards the baptism of the Spirit as essential in the field of exorcism, both for empowering and equipping the person ministering and for the after-care and fruitfulness of the person being ministered to. A person who has been delivered may experience after-effects for quite some time, and this may be in the form of numbness and depression, which can come as an anti-climax after the initial joy of release which may have been experienced. Marks and scars can be very deep and can take time to heal. Self-discipline, as distinct from self-effort, is necessary to resist the inevitable counter-attack of Satan, and faith rather than feelings are crucial throughout the sometimes difficult stages in recovery after ministry, with whole-hearted worship and love for Jesus and complete dedication to Him providing the key to lasting victory. These then are Harper's guidelines for a balanced and biblical ministry of exorcism.

Every Catholic service of the sacrament of baptism includes a prayer of exorcism, and the Life in the Spirit Seminars Team Manual instructs that a short prayer of exorcism should precede the prayer for baptism in the Spirit. This should be said simply, quietly, and undramatically, and in order to ensure the departure of whatever evil spirits may be present. The Manual states that this is to be differentiated from the kind of exorcism that is necessary when an individual is actually possessed or obsessed, although it does not make clear in what way<sup>31</sup>. One may perhaps assume that

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31. Life In The Spirit Seminars Team Manual. Servant Books. 1973. pp.144-145.

here the exorcism is a matter of routine rather than a formal exorcism. The former is also recommended where appropriate during Confession, in which case a simple direct prayer of deliverance should follow a prayer of protection that through the death, resurrection and shedding of the blood of Christ, both priest and penitent be protected from all evil<sup>32</sup>.

John Richards lists the order of need of the individual as firstly the Gospel, then deliverance, and then exorcism. He emphasises the positive side of the reality of demon possession, saying:

"Viewed positively, those who are immune from such suffering are those whose doors are 'shut' to the psychic, occult, magical or demonic forces and pressures, who love God (and hence live without fear) and whose lives not only have a spiritual foundation in this way, but a psychological one as well - in that their love for God will show itself in an ordered way of life and service to others ..."<sup>33</sup>

Some points made by Richards may serve to supplement Harper's extensive treatment outlined above. He comments concerning the fact that confrontation with holy things can cause a demon-possessed person to become unconscious, saying that he does not believe this mechanism to be demonic as such. It is rather a conversion hysteria to resolve the internal conflict caused by the demonic reaction against the sacred, and a personal abhorrence of desecration<sup>34</sup>. He describes an individual's doubting of their conversion, or the conviction - more accurately the delusion - of having committed the unforgiveable sin as "frequent demonic symptoms"<sup>35</sup>.

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32. Michael Scanlan: The Power In Penance. Ava Maria Press. 1972. pp.52-53.

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33. op.cit.6. p.132.

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34. op.cit.6. p.144.

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35. op.cit.6. pp.151-152.

Like Harper, he feels that the baptism of the Spirit has an important role to play in this ministry. Speaking of the command to demons to come out of a possessed person, he says:

"Since spatial terms are the most obvious to use, this should never be said without a clear idea of what will be going in, since a vacuum is abhorred here as elsewhere. A 'blessing' and infilling of the Spirit of Jesus begun and maintained is the other side of the coin. It has become clear to me that in a number of cases the spiritual clearing-out and renewal process can be described (somewhat negatively) as exorcism, and positively as a blessing. There are recorded examples of instantaneous release from drug dependence as a result of either exorcism or the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. This is important, for it probably indicates complimentary truths about the spiritual reality of exorcism and the spiritual reality of such 'Baptism'. Namely that, in spite of the term, much of the reality of exorcism is a putting in; and in spite of the 'Baptism' term, a great deal of that reality may be a driving out. If the occupants of a large house are suddenly replaced by others, it could either be viewed as a rush out of the back door, or a rush in through the front. I hope that the 'front door' viewpoint will be maintained in spite of so much back-door terminology with which this study has had to be concerned."

He too is hesitant about enquiry concerning the name of the occupying demon. On a practical level, however, it does clarify who or what is being addressed, and enables the Church to ensure that such things are replaced by their opposites in the aftercare of the person, particularly where the names given are indicative of immorality. In his consideration of why there are failures in the practice of exorcism, Richards largely concurs with Harper. Although it can be due to the patient, it is as much the failure of the counsellor for embarking on a deliverance ministry when the patient is not yet ready or prepared for it. Apart from inaccurate diagnosis of the demonic, the main cause of failure is asserted to be the removal of the exorcism from the context of deliverance and salvation, or its separation from the healing community of the Church. The exorcist must



beware of certain pitfalls which may befall him. Pride in success may give birth to the belief that personal rather than divine power is involved and even if couched in Christian terms, this is nothing other than magic. The danger of this cannot be underestimated. It is essential that the exorcist be fully prepared for the ministry, and here the case of the sons of Sceva in Acts ch.19 is mentioned. In addition to this, Richards describes the startling case of an unprepared army padre who commanded a demon to leave a person and then dropped dead himself, whereas the victim was fully recovered<sup>36</sup>. Like Harper, Richards places the laying on of hands within the context of prayer for the subsequent blessing of a person. If used for the actual exorcism, there is the danger of some temporary transference of evil power occurring<sup>37</sup>.

The dangers involved in an indiscriminate or inexperienced ministry of exorcism should therefore be apparent to those who are prepared to heed the advice and warnings of those who are knowledgeable in this field. Whilst a quiet, unpublicised ministry of exorcism is carried out in many churches throughout Britain, it is the abuses and malpractices of this ministry, often unconnected with any church, which receive publicity. One particular case in March of 1975 received national coverage both on television and in the press, achieving notoriety as "The Yorkshire Exorcism Case"<sup>38</sup>. It involved a man who underwent exorcism by a group of people and who afterwards murdered his wife. Many participants in the Charismatic Movement regarded this case as a warning of the things that could go wrong

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36. op.cit.6. p.143.

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37. See op.cit.6. pp.166-171 for more detail.

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38. This case has been documented in many national and provincial newspapers, but see especially The Yorkshire Post, 26th - 31st March 1975. The headlines "Demon Killer: Clergy Blamed"; "Night of the casting out of devils by the score"; and "Background to exorcism - where the angels fear to tread" are indicative of the approach of the media to cases of exorcism.

for the inexperienced and ill-prepared who operate outside of a church's ministry. In an editorial in Renewal<sup>39</sup> Michael Harper stated that the case constituted a solemn warning to all who treat exorcism seriously. He expressed concern about the over-emphasis in some quarters on so-called deliverance ministry, and spoke of certain books and teachings which had led some people to "see demons everywhere", creating a morbid interest in the subject. As a result, many untrained amateur exorcists are "glibly unaware of the dangers and difficulties involved". This case was for many an introduction to exorcism, and John Richards also comments upon it<sup>40</sup>, indicating the points at which it was helpful and those at which it was misleading. He regards as dangerously misleading the implication that the man became a murderer as the result of the ministry, and emphasises that those involved were ministering to a killer and did not create one. The second misleading impression was that an error was made in the diagnosis, the implication of this being that either spiritual illness does not exist, or that mental and spiritual illnesses are rigid alternatives. Thirdly, he regrets the press's equation of exorcism merely with the case in question or with The Exorcist film. Furthermore, Christian commentators generally failed to stress the range of the deliverance ministry or to distinguish between the useful classifications of 'major' and 'minor' exorcism. In addition to this, most of the authorities whose opinions were sought were of the 'traditional' or 'sacramental' approach to exorcism. Richards feels that even within the Church there has been a failure to "recognise that in the last decade there has built up in Britain the 'pentecostalist' approach". The case in question should really be assessed within the context of the Pentecostalist approach rather than the traditional approach, and if this is done, then the all-night session of exorcism appears less extreme. He does not amplify this statement, but one may infer that the Pentecostalist approach is one in which the reality and immediacy of demonic forces is perhaps taken more seriously and dealt with more directly than in the traditional approach. Some newspapers, however,

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39. Michael Harper: editorial ("Exorcism"). Renewal No.57. June/July 1975. p.6.

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40. John Richards: "Exorcism Today". Renewal No.57. June/July 1975. pp.18-19.

did follow a calmer and more balanced approach. One paper described at some length the charismatic ministry of deliverance exercised by Trevor Dearing, who is well-known to participants in the Charismatic Movement. Richards also quotes examples from an article in which the following remarks were made by Dr. Henry Cooper:

"An excess of zeal in trying to drive out the devil is merely playing Satan's game. Exorcism within the church does not mean driving the devil out by force, rather it is the replacement of evil - quietly, gently and calmly - by the love and power of God."

This case naturally prompted many letters to the press, many of which consisted of constructive comments by Christians. In particular, it must be noted that undoubted abuse does not provide grounds for the indiscriminate condemnation of the ministry of Christian exorcism, and a greater realization of the limits of psychiatric understanding, accompanied by a greater awareness of religious frames of reference, is necessary.

In view of disturbing cases such as the above, many charismatics feel that some sort of control should be exercised over the ministry of exorcism. There is general agreement that the leaders of the local church should be responsible for this, and that fairly strict control is necessary to prevent people acting without care, consideration and humility. Many churches do in fact exercise this control. The Bradford House Church, for instance, does not permit even its house group leaders who are involved in front-line pastoral responsibility to venture into the field of exorcism. All such situations are brought to the elders<sup>41</sup>. Michael Harper agrees that control is best exercised in the local church, rightly pointing out that other authorities lack the time necessary to exercise proper control over this kind of ministry, and some of them in any case do not believe in the existence of evil spirits:

"Every local church should bring this ministry under the general

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41. Interview with leaders of the Bradford House Church. February 1981.

surveillance of its particular disciplines. Only people whom the leaders respect and regard as suitable should be permitted to exercise such a ministry amongst church leaders. Ministers should pray that God will raise up people, properly qualified, who can fulfil it."

Itinerant speakers who claim such a ministry should have their credentials examined to avoid the problems and confusion often left behind by such people. Harper finds it significant that the New Testament mentions neither Christian exorcists nor deliverance centres specialising in this ministry. He concludes from this that it was never God's intention for any Christian to specialize in this exacting ministry, and that it is better and healthier for the whole body of Christ to be concerned, and for those who are called to this ministry within the local church to be integrated into the rest of the fellowship<sup>42</sup>.

Whilst the above writers frequently reiterate the fact that Christ is more powerful than all evil forces and that through their union in Him Christians can experience victory, it is understandable if the observer feels a certain alarm at the degree to which evil can apparently infiltrate a person's life. A crucial question to be considered in connection with this is the extent to which such forces can control a Christian. Can a Christian in fact be possessed by demons? Most Christians have traditionally denied that this can be so, on the grounds that Scripture teaches that a Christian's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.ch.3.v.16 and 1 Cor.ch.6.v.19), and it is impossible for the Holy Spirit to dwell together with demonic spirits in a man. However, an increasing number of people are now coming round to the belief that whilst this theory would appear to be sound, experience belies it. John Richards holds this latter position himself and clarifies the matter somewhat by distinguishing between 'possession' and 'ownership'. Whilst a Christian is incontrovertibly owned by Christ, he may nevertheless be possessed by demons<sup>43</sup>. Possession in the sense of a complete take-over of the

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42. op.cit.11. pp.62-63.

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43. op.cit.6. p.129.

personality can never be experienced by a Christian, but no Christian is immune from "having" an evil spirit in the New Testament sense. The fact that exorcism is no longer a part of the Protestant baptismal service means that people may retain the evil spirits they had prior to becoming Christians. Peter Lyne, writing in Fullness, adds to this:

"In those (New Testament) days unclean spirits came out of people when they turned to the Lord from paganism. Today we have many believers still in demonic bondage because we let them in on an easy ticket. Our Master's commission to us was to preach the gospel and to cast out demons." <sup>44</sup> (his italics)

If Peter Lyne is correct, today's churches may contain a considerable number of people who are possessed. Furthermore, asserts Harper, it is equally possible to be baptised or filled with the Holy Spirit and not to be released from satanic bondages. His reasoning behind this is that it has been confirmed repeatedly in experience of ministry. Nevertheless, it indicates that the prayer for exorcism which precedes prayer for baptism in the Spirit in the Life In The Spirit Seminars may be a wise and necessary precaution. Other leaders make a delicate distinction between a Christian having a demon and a demon having a Christian, but this is a thin line indeed and is really answering the question affirmatively. One house church leader emphasised that all Christians are affected by demons whether they like it or not, but that this must be viewed positively in that they have the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, and the holy angels to protect them. Another pointed out that God and demons occupy the same area in the universe, and he could not see why this should be different in Christians. He felt that it was playing with semantics to try and determine whether an active demon was either inside or outside of a person, the important point to consider being that demonic forces must ultimately be dealt with and deliverance brought about <sup>45</sup>.

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44. Peter Lyne: "Ministries". Fullness Vol.5. p.14.

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45. Interviews with house church leaders in southern England. July 1980.

Hugh Thompson has suggested three simple explanations for satanic bondage in Christians. The first of these is indulgence in sin, for it is indeed a serious matter when a Christian sins 'with his eyes wide open'. Referring to Jam.ch.1.vv.14-15, Thompson says that a believer's reaction to temptation and evil desire is his own responsibility, and to yield knowingly is to open a 'landing strip' for demonic powers. If he persistently gives in to a particular temptation he can end up in a state of demonic bondage, and if he is unable to break free from habitual carnality he needs deliverance from evil spirits. The second explanation is that a traumatic experience may open a Christian to invasion by evil powers if he reacts wrongly to it. The woman with a spirit of infirmity who is described in Lk.ch.13.vv.10-16 may have become a victim in this way, and Thompson notes that Jesus referred to her as 'a daughter of Abraham', which he interprets as meaning a saved soul. What Thompson describes as 'hang-overs from pre-conversion days' constitutes a third category of bondage, which he regards as "well illustrated by Lazarus's grave-clothes". This illustration remains unclear, although it seems that Thompson finds significance in the fact that Jesus instructed others to "unbind" Lazarus<sup>46</sup>. His conclusions, however, bring some clarity to the question under discussion:

"Evangelicals do not usually have any theological problem about pronouncing a man truly born again, even if at first he is still shackled by his pre-conversion addiction to nicotine. In a similar way we have found many saved people who have needed to be delivered from occult bondage resulting from their tampering with ouja boards and such like before they came to Christ. Bondage may even be inherited from a grandmother who practised the dark arts of the medium and whose sins still affect a third and fourth generations (Exod.ch.20.v.4 in the light of 1 Cor.ch.10.vv.19-20)." <sup>47</sup>

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46. The case of Lazarus is frequently quoted by writers to illustrate a variety of points (see Harper above), often unrelated. It is a passage which in particular has been subjected to speculative exegesis.

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47. op.cit.18.

The swing of opinion is thus increasingly to the position that it is indeed possible for a Christian to be possessed. The topic is certainly a disturbing one, and the reality of the possibility needs to be held in balance with the fact that victory is to be won through Christ. John Richard's book is noteworthy for its essentially positive and God-centred approach, and he stresses that the Church's ministry is one of proclaiming the victory, not merely a kind of 'counter-magic'. Another positive result of his consideration of demonology and exorcism is, he feels, to be found in the sphere of theology. Contemporary experience serves to emphasise the status of the New Testament records, for episodes which so many have dismissed as 'representative of myth, misunderstanding, or inaccuracy, are exactly paralleled in contemporary experience, and this includes everything in the story of the Geresine demoniac, including the implied possession of the swine (Mk.ch.5.vv.11-13). Richards ventures to suggest that if it is permissible to divide the roles of pastor and of theologian, as long as the pastor is truly of the Church and not some heretical crank, he is not answerable to the theologians for aspects of genuine Christian experience. The theologians must rather evaluate and interpret such experience. He continues:

"For this reason I have not attempted to give a theological critique of demons and deliverance. I have instead drawn together a good deal of contemporary Christian experience of men and women of all denominations, and have not provided a theology, but the raw stuff about which theology must be hammered out. That is the theologian's job, not mine, and it is with life that the theologian has to deal, not selections from it. A theological readjustment to accomodate the facts presented here would encourage the Church, and be an advance for it, not a setback."

Richards notes a certain interest among clergy and ordinands concerning exorcism, but regrets that it is not always placed within its rightful context of the healing ministry of the Church. For this reason he has consistently refused to speak on the subject unless it is within a course on this healing ministry<sup>48</sup>. Hugh Thompson reiterates the importance of

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48. op.cit.6. pp.213-219.

this correct context and advises:

"If even now you identify some pastoral needs in your own life, make your first priority the finding of your true spiritual home where you can be treated as a whole person, not just a 'case', and so be shepherded into wholeness." 49

And warning against engrossment by "the epidemic of the powers of darkness all around us today", Tom Smail writes triumphantly:

"The only interest that the New Testament has in the dark demons, and the principalities and powers that would lord it in our lives and in God's world, is simply to proclaim that Jesus is greater than them all." 50

Many have noted that the deliverance ministry is in fact an evangelistic ministry, preparing the way and pointing to Christ with immediacy and clarity and frequently culminating in Christian commitment. John Richards concludes:

"Deliverance is both complex and simple; complex in the multiplicity of social, psychological, domestic and spiritual factors that have contributed to a spiritual state of bondage or oppression, simple in the hackneyed but true statement that 'Jesus Christ is the Answer'; simple in that the latter state is prevented from being worse than the former by the filling of the Holy Spirit." 51

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49. op.cit.18.

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50. Tom Smail: "Jesus is Lord". Renewal No.43. Feb/March 1973. p.27.

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51. John Richards: "The Victory Given". Renewal No.40. Aug/Sept. 1972. p.34.



This statement is indicative of the more balanced and mature approach to demonology and exorcism that has developed in the Charismatic Movement. It is therefore an appropriate one with which to conclude this chapter.

## Chapter 10,

HOLINESS AND SANCTIFICATION

The Charismatic Movement stands in a line of movements which have re-emphasised the experiential aspect of Christianity<sup>1</sup>, and the more recent of these movements have also been characterised by distinctive doctrines of holiness and sanctification. The Charismatic Movement's own forerunner, Classical Pentecostalism, was itself preceded - and some would say extensively influenced by - the 'Holiness Movements' of the nineteenth century. These movements developed out of Methodism, and the basic premises of their theology were constructed by John Wesley in the eighteenth century, who emphasized the inner "witness of the Spirit" and taught that sanctification was a second work of grace distinct from and following justification. The doctrine of perfectionism was emphasised by holiness teachers in camp meetings and 'higher life' conventions in the nineteenth century, and sanctification was clearly proclaimed as the 'second blessing', a cleansing of the heart from all sin which was sometimes referred to as the Baptism of the Holy Ghost (Spirit). The formation of National Holiness Associations occurred in America in 1867 to counter a de-emphasis of holiness teaching in Methodism widely attributed to the American Civil War. They aimed to revive an interest in holiness teaching and practice. Denunciation by Methodist churches, however, led to the establishment of new denominations devoted to this theology, which they considered to be the original Methodism taught by Wesley. Holiness advocates travelled abroad, and a revival of holiness in Britain in 1859 eventually resulted in a series of summer conventions at Keswick, which became the British equivalent of the American National Holiness Association. There was, however, a difference of emphasis in Britain which resulted in a different view of sanctification. This held that sanctification was in reality the "baptism with the Holy Spirit".

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1. This line stretches from Montanism in the late second century through the Anabaptist, Jansenist, Quietist, and other smaller movements to the Holiness movements of the last century.

Whilst the British moved towards this different terminology, the Americans continued to refer to the second work as "sanctification", and to stress the Wesleyan doctrines of perfection, purity and cleansing. But by means of extensive literature, the Keswick view of "holy Ghost" power came to be as widely known as Wesley's "Christian perfection", and by the eighteen-nineties and the early twentieth century, such 'Keswick terminology' had permeated much of the American Holiness Movement, and had exerted considerable influence there. Whilst Wesley himself never identified sanctification as the baptism with the Holy Ghost, he was regarded as the true founder of the Holiness Movements. The schisms resulting from the Holiness Movements in America have been interpreted as a conservative movement to preserve a religious way of life of an earlier era, and as Methodism began to accept the premises of the social gospel and the findings of higher criticism, the more conservative elements of the church expressed their protest by joining the holiness revolt. 'Holiness Movements' continue today in America in the form of numerous sect-like groups with thousands of individual churches whose members seek spiritual perfection through strong emotional experience. In Britain, some of the house churches which have developed in the past decade are reminiscent of some aspects of 'Holiness' doctrine in their teaching about sanctification.

The Classical Pentecostal Movement which developed between 1901 and 1906 represented a theological division within the Holiness Movement, basically caused by controversy over the evidence required as proof of baptism in the Spirit. Classical Pentecostals maintained that speaking in tongues was the indispensable evidence of the baptism, whilst those who disagreed remained in the Holiness Movement. Some Pentecostals spoke of two 'stages' of salvation, conversion and baptism in the Spirit, but others added a third, that of sanctification<sup>2</sup>, and the latter topic remained a matter for debate as Pentecostalism developed. When the Charismatic Movement developed in the nineteen-sixties, it received support and

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2. The dispute between the Pentecostals who teach the two-stage pattern of salvation and those who teach the three-stage pattern remains unresolved. The two-stage pattern of salvation does not necessitate the identification of baptism in the Spirit with sanctification, but it is nevertheless often implied.

encouragement from some in Classical Pentecostal circles<sup>3</sup>, and inherited the Classical Pentecostal theology as a framework for its initial self-understanding. Methodist charismatics are particularly conscious of their heritage in the Holiness and Classical Pentecostal Movements. Methodist minister Ross Peart, for example, has quoted Frederick Dale Bruner's words that:

"Pentecostalism is Primitive Methodism's extended incarnation..."

and those of the Jesuit I. Vegara that:

"The Pentecostal Movement is Methodism brought to its ultimate consequences." <sup>4</sup>

Given these strong historical links with Holiness movements, the teaching of the Charismatic Movement concerning holiness and sanctification is particularly interesting and may shed some light upon the historical development of this sphere of doctrine.

Tom Smail attributes great importance to holiness in the life of the Christian, and he goes into some detail on the subject<sup>5</sup>. Pointing out that the New Testament regularly defines the Christian goal as holiness, he pinpoints two texts, 1 Pet.ch.1.v.15 and Heb.ch.12.v.10, which show that

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3. David du Plessis, frequently described as "Mr. Pentecost", and the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International are noteworthy in this respect. See further in Appendix 1.

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4. Ross Peart: "Notes on the 75th Anniversary of Twentieth Century Pentecostalism". Dunamis No.36. July 1981. p.5.

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5. T.A. Smail: "A whole offering" (editorial). Theological Renewal No.3. June/July 1976. pp.2-6.

God's call to Christians is a call to holiness that will in some way resemble His own. Such participation in His holiness is the whole aim and end of the discipline to which He constantly subjects His children. This, Smail emphasises, is the context in which charismatic experience must be set, for only so will it make sense both to the involved and to those who watch them. He states that the definition of such holiness is a theological task, and notes the tendency of the word itself to bring to mind unattractive associations and many misconceptions. Smail interprets the Charismatic Renewal as being, in God's intention, a training in holiness, and he detects the need for the development of a scriptural doctrine of sanctification. As a contribution towards this, he suggests several guidelines. Firstly, it must be Christocentric rather than subjective, for holiness is not primarily concerned with man's inner state, but rather with the person and history of Jesus Christ in which the Father's holiness is manifested and His purpose for men revealed. Smail feels that much Catholic and Protestant teaching about sanctification has been over-concerned with the subjective and psychological processes by which grace operates in the soul, whether it is crisis or process and whether it advances to the achievement of perfection, or always remains incomplete in this life. The correct balance is to be maintained in remembering that Christians are being changed into Christ's likeness, and are looking towards Christ as a consequence of this realization in order to understand both the purpose and the process of that transformation. The emphasis in teaching about sanctification is therefore to be positive rather than negative, and Smail sees a need for correction in Protestantism especially. He feels that it has tended to be sin-centred rather than God-centred, in the sense that consecration to God has been neglected whilst separation from sin has been to the fore. The holiness of Jesus:

" ... attacks the negative only for the sake of the positive ...  
breaks only to mend, and empties only to fill."

Christian holiness is also to be personal rather than orientated towards ideals, for the Christian life consists of participation in the life of Christ, not in the pursuit of ideals of love, purity, selflessness, truth, and the like. The call to be holy is a gracious offer before it is a daunting demand. Furthermore, it is to be corporate rather than

individual, because, as the expression of Christ to the world, the Church as a body must be holy. Smail notes that in the New Testament, holiness has to do less with the state of individual souls than with the quality and rightness of relationships with God and with other Christians. Holiness is also to be holistic as opposed to moralistic, and here Smail comments:

"New Testament holiness does not consist of an exclusive concern with the observance of moral standards in and for themselves, nor with an ascetic denial of our created humanity in order to cultivate a segregated and narrowly conceived spiritual goodness. It is these misconceptions which have made the whole notion of holiness so inhuman and forbidding ... A scriptural doctrine of sanctification must be full-blooded enough to take us out of the claustrophobic atmosphere of a rigid moralism into the wideness and wholeness of God's new creation."

Smail feels that the world-affirming emphasis of the Charismatic Movement places it in a position which can enable it to see holiness in this holistic way. Christ's holiness is to be the Christian's holiness and in considering how the former is to be understood, Smail speaks in terms of Christ making one's humanity holy by making of it a whole offering to God.

Smail draws out two principles from the Old Testament sacrificial cult which were fulfilled in Christ as He sanctified manhood in Himself, and are thus helpful in attempting to define Christ's holiness and that of the Christian. The first principle is that what was given to God in sacrifice had to be whole, and one may thus think of holiness as a wholeness. Healing of every kind is a major theme in the gospel, and Smail quotes 1 Thess.ch.5.v.23 to show that holiness is positive and personal, covering the whole spiritual, intellectual, emotional and moral as well as the physical wellbeing of the Christian. Again, the model is the person and history of Christ. Eph.ch.5.v.25 expresses the same thought, but in a more explicitly corporate way. Smail then brings in an interesting extension of this concept of holiness as wholeness. He sees pastoral work as a sanctifying work and states that Christians do God's will when they heal, and make men holy as they make them whole. The implications of this statement need careful consideration in several areas. Whilst one can

maybe appreciate the thought behind the assertion in a very general sense, the personal nature of salvation is compromised with the suggestion that a person may be made holy in an indirect way. A more precise definition of exactly what Smail means would have been helpful. However, he now goes on to the second principle, and this is the converse of the first, namely that wholeness was for offering. One may therefore consider holiness as sacrifice. Smail criticises the "kind of teenage evangelism" that majors on John.ch.10.vv.10-11, presenting self-fulfillment and personal salvation as ends in themselves, and also the parallel charismatic emphasis on healing and pastoral counselling which offers spiritual, emotional and physical health as the first and chief gift of God. Whereas both these emphases are authentic presentations of the gospel, they are incomplete ones, and may lead to perversions of the gospel by making it falsely self-centred. This leads to Smail's point that in the New Testament wholeness is given to but not necessarily for the believer, rather for God and other people. In the reception of this wholeness and in the giving of it is the Christian's holiness and the image of Christ. Therefore sanctification lies in the wholeness that is offered in sacrifice. This touches the note of consecration and separation to God which is prominent in the New Testament, and connects also with the whole concept of being one with Christ in His sacrifice which has been a major theme of Catholic piety. It is in this context, then, that the experiences and gift of the Spirit have their meaning:

"They are experiences of the wholeness of our life in Christ and of his new humanity, and their end is sacrifice, that we should be able to give ourselves in new ways to God and for men."

In a consideration of 1 and 2 Peter, Colin Greene links holiness with the Holy Spirit, concentrating upon the life of holiness and obedience to Christ which should be apparent in the life of any Christian community as a sign of the sanctifying Spirit's presence there<sup>6</sup>. He too sees holiness in

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6. Colin Greene: Renewal Study Section ("The Holy Spirit and holiness in 1 and 2 Peter"). Renewal No.78. Dec/Jan. 1979.

terms of wholeness, and emphasises that holiness is not something which springs out of an encounter with God (1 Pet.ch.1.vv.15,16) but will be maintained only by a constant exposure of the life to the Holy Spirit (1 Pet.ch.1.v.2). The marks of holiness are hope, joy, love and faith in equal measure, and these will lead to wholeness in every area of the Christian's life. Because it involves wholeness, holiness in the individual will involve every aspect of the personality. There will be wholeness of mind and Spirit, of will and purpose (principally in obedience to Christ and the resistance of natural inclinations towards self-gratification and self-indulgence) and wholeness of conduct and behaviour. Greene points out that these two letters are addressed to communities, not individuals, and that holiness in the body involves, in biblical terminology, building a holy temple, becoming a holy priesthood, and being a holy people. Suffering is also a way by which Christians may be brought to wholeness and holiness.

Smail seeks to put holiness in its rightful position as the Christian's inheritance before it is the Christian's task: it is not to be produced by self, but is to be received from Christ where it is complete and waiting to be bestowed. The fruit of the Spirit are also gifts of the Spirit, and grow by His activity rather than the Christian's. Holiness is neither to be neglected, which will result in a fall into licence, nor to be hardened, which will result in a fall under the law. It is a gift of the Father, through Christ, in the Spirit, and should be viewed as such. The result will be:

"... people whose lives proclaim the abundance of the Lord's righteousness implanted afresh in them, and who through the beginnings of consistency of character and gift, proclaim the credible likeness of Jesus."<sup>7</sup>

But what is the relationship of the experience of charismatic renewal to sanctification? Smail states that one cannot be deeply involved with the

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7. T.A. Smail: editorial ("Wholly on holiness"). Renewal No.62. April/May 1976. pp.2-3.



Holy Spirit without also being deeply involved in the work of sanctification that He wants to do within<sup>8</sup>. The two must go together. The overstressing of renewing experiences of the release of the Spirit and one-sided concentration upon His gifts may result in "being stranded in the middle of Hebrews ch.13.vv.20-21": being 'equipped with everything good' without knowing that the only purpose behind this is that one may 'do his will' and that He may work that 'which is pleasing in his sight'. Smail seeks to place charismatic experience in its proper position as a part of a large and over-arching purpose of God. Many who have entered into charismatic experience are frustrated, at least partly because they do not know what to do with what has happened to them. They fail to see it as part of a process leading to perfect completeness. This is why so many Christians still feel charismatic experience to be quite eccentric, for it is not seen to be related in any essential way to the central purposes and intentions of God in Christ as the gospel reveals them. Smail notes the current emphasis upon the release of the Spirit as an integral aspect of Christian initiation, and this in itself places charismatic experience within the context of the Christian's progress in holiness. Sanctification, then, is understood by Smail as a process distinct from charismatic renewal, but in which charismatic renewal may take place.

Michael Harper also distinguishes clearly between the experience of baptism in the Spirit and sanctification, saying that they are not the same thing and that the experience of the baptism may not necessarily touch the inner nature. A person may have much charismatic power, yet still be an immature Christian<sup>9</sup>. He states that there is no suggestion in Scripture that charismatic blessing was promised on condition of a holy life, nor that its immediate result would be a state of entire sanctification. Acts ch.15.vv.8-9, sometimes quoted in support of the view that this experience is primarily one of sanctification is, when seen in its context, referring rather to justification<sup>10</sup>.

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8. op.cit.5.

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9. Many charismatics stress this point.

Catholic charismatics hold to a similar position, though for somewhat different reasons. For Catholics, the process of sanctification is understood to begin at baptism, when the Holy Spirit begins to dwell in the soul. Furthermore, traditional theology links the gifts of Isaiah ch.11.vv.2-3 with sanctification, whereas the gifts of 1 Cor.ch.12 are concerned with service. Instant sanctity is not expected to result from a baptism in the Spirit experience, but some change should be apparent as David Parry notes:

"We are entitled to look for some result of his touching, not instant sanctity indeed ... but some indication that those who claim to be touched by him are more prone to prayer, more concerned about sin, and more sensitive in charity to their neighbours than they were before ..." <sup>11</sup>

Charismatics have sometimes given the impression that they are 'better' than non-charismatics, having progressed one rung further up the ladder to holiness by the attainment of charismatic experience. Their claim that everyone should seek a baptism in the Spirit often serves to reinforce this, and David Parry attempts to clarify matters, refuting the 'ladder' theory and explaining how the charismatic has been misunderstood with regard to this:

"It seems to me that a person is liable to a charge of elitism if they feel themselves better than others. And 'charismatics' cannot deny that they claim a spiritual awareness and fruits from it which they had not known previously, and that they believe that most of the other persons with whom they live would benefit from these things. But this is a long way from thinking that one is a better servant of God than another, or rendering more valuable service. The 'charismatic' believes in his heart that

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10. Michael Harper: Power For The Body Of Christ. Fountain Trust. 1964. p.33.

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11. David Parry: Not Mad, Most Noble Festus. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1979. p.44.

he has undergone a deep transformation in his personality, altering his previous interior state to his present one, and that therefore he is a better person than he was. But this does not mean that he is a better person than another person or has corresponded to grace more faithfully than another. And if he wishes in his heart that the same kind of grace be given to another person it is not that the other may come up to his standard, but that they may receive an increase of divine indwelling, making them yet happier, more joyful, more alive in the Lord than they are now." <sup>12</sup>

This is a delicate distinction, carefully made, and whilst one appreciates that charismatics may not wish to imply that they are in a more desirable spiritual state than others, it really is an inescapable implication of their particular view of the nature of the baptism in the Spirit. What is clear, however, is that those charismatics represented by Smail, Harper and Parry have clearly rejected the Holiness Movement doctrine of Christian perfection and its equation of baptism in the Spirit with sanctification. Father Kentigern Devlin<sup>13</sup> accurately summarises the position of the majority of charismatics when he describes his impression of the people at the first Charismatic Conference which he attended at Hopwood Hall in 1975:

"What had I expected? A bunch of ecclesiastical drop-outs? A collection of four hundred holier-than-thous? What I found was a group of people generous in their desire to have a real relationship with the Lord and thus build up his Church on earth. There were no pretensions of being holy but a desire to be so."

Many people who have become involved in the Charismatic Movement come from church backgrounds which they now believe to have been excessively legalistic. These backgrounds are very often of the Brethren or of an independent or denominational evangelical church, and where excessive

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12. op.cit.11. p.58.

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13. Kentigern Devlin in: Anointed With The Spirit. Mayhew-McCrimmon. 1978. pp.27-28.

legalism did predominate, charismatic renewal has brought a welcome release into new-found freedom and individuality. However, some people have reacted so strongly against their backgrounds that they have swung to the opposite extreme, proclaiming a liberation from law which leaves them free from the influence and effects of sin. The believer thus attains a state of complete sanctification. This type of doctrine has been taught by Gerald Coates and Hugh Thompson in their books Free From Sin<sup>14</sup> and Not Under Law<sup>15</sup>. In the former, the authors aim "to bring many into a walk free from sin" and claim to provide practical instruction on how to move into "the enjoyment of constant deliverance". They react against the fact that many Christians are resigned to sin and do not show a change in their lives following conversion. They are certainly correct in refusing to accept this state of affairs, and in the assertions that God's will for Christians is that they should not sin and that the Holy Spirit is at work in imparting a moral quality of life to believers. However, they fail to balance this with the Bible's teaching that an individual's sinful nature remains when they become a Christian, and that sanctification is an on-going process which does not reach culmination in this life. Consequently, Coates and Thompson only present one side of the coin in their zeal to stir Christians to holiness. This means that some of their statements are true in themselves but need to be considered in conjunction with other teachings of Scripture for the true biblical perspective on sin and holiness to be clear. The authors, for example, state:

"God intends that his children should enjoy the rule of his Spirit and not suffer the dictatorship of the flesh."

This is true, but they either ignore or fail to notice passages such as Rom.ch.7.vv.21-23, which make it clear that the desires of the flesh are still very much to be reckoned with and that there is no effortless rise to holiness. Again, they write:

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14. Gerald Coates and Hugh Thompson: Free From Sin. Private Publication.

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15. Gerald Coates and Hugh Thompson: Not Under Law. Private publication.

"Once a person has willed the will of God by deciding to live in the Spirit subject to his life, an amazing transformation takes place ... When a person lives from this Source of Life the flesh will drop into disuse, starved of all unnatural tendencies - as God deems unnatural!"

This is clearly unbiblical, and there is also considerable misunderstanding with regard to the experience of the apostle Paul:

"Paul's flesh-versus-spirit warfare, in which he had lost every battle in the early days of his Christian life, resulted from his trying so hard to please God by sheer will-power ... But for years now - oh joy! - he had lived in triumph over the law of sin and death. He had discovered the glorious fact that the law of the Spirit of life counteracted this inbred gravitational pull of sin in his flesh." (their italics)

Verses from Rom.chs.7 and 8 are used to justify the above, but these have been lifted out of their context of verses such as Rom.ch.7.vv.15-19, which make it clear that Paul was troubled by his sinfulness at the time of writing. 1 Jn.ch.3.v.9 is quoted to show that those born of God cannot sin, and it is claimed that 2 Cor.ch.6.v.2 offers the Christian Christ-likeness now, today. The authors assert that to keep on repenting is resignation to a subnormal standard of spiritual life, and that evangelicals have an "inbuilt defence mechanism" against any doctrine of consistent holiness, the implication being that any objections to their teaching can be put down to this.

Human nature is not conceived of in this book as sinful in itself, for it is claimed that the Bible presents sin as a person other than man, Satan. Human nature is therefore presented as neutral ground between sin personified in Satan and holiness personified in Jesus. The inevitable conclusion of this follows:

"To be aware of temptation is not sin. The first thought does not constitute sin - but the second does! But God has provided his Spirit so that his children need never accept that second

thought ... Your partnership with Christ is such an essential unity that you can afford to get on with the business of living quite spontaneously, for the two of you have become one spirit ... it follows that every case of sin arises from a failure to trust and obey the God of grace ..."

This is too simplistic, failing both to take into account the Bible's consistent teaching about the innate sinfulness of human nature, and to admit the much more complex relationship that exists between the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. It also fails to consider Jam.ch.1.v.4, which speaks of temptation by the Christian's own desires. The authors describe Jesus's work today as follows:

"In his office as High Priest he continually supplies a well-fenced highway of holiness along the edge of the cliff-top. But in his capacity as our 'Advocate with the Father' he makes available a first-aid service at the foot of the cliff!"

However, all one has to do to remain securely on the cliff-top is to trust and believe:

"Now God by his grace has promised that the believer shall do more than keep the Law without any striving at all. How is it done? By believing the promises."

This partly does away with the need for Christ's atoning death, again ignoring the reality of human sinfulness and fleshly desires. The teaching contained in this book is unbalanced and one-sided, and becomes unbiblical as a result.

Not Under Law is a development and application of the claims made in Free From Sin. Once again, Coates and Thompson make valid points which can be stressed beneficially among Christians. They rightly place repeated stress upon totally free grace and question the emphasis upon law - 'doing the right things' - in contemporary evangelicalism. The book therefore launches a vigorous attack upon religiosity and legalism. However, the word 'legalism' is used in two senses. In the first, it refers to the

attempt to win God's favour by keeping the law, and in the second to the attempt to obey God and love God and Man with the law as one of the positive guidelines. Whereas the first is unbiblical, the second is not and is, on the contrary, commanded repeatedly in the New Testament. Coates and Thompson at first appear to recognise the dangers of imbalance:

"How, then, are we to achieve the healthy balance between the carefree enjoyment of the grace of God and the awe produced by the fear of God?"

However, it soon becomes clear that they have lost this balance in their failure to realise that the New Testament gives specific and detailed commandments.

"Immediately we proclaim pure grace, almost every fundamental believer feels it his bounded duty to 'balance' it up with teaching on discipline, but that of a self-made brand rather than fruit of the Spirit."

The authors assert:

"But God's standard remains intangible. Christ himself is our norm: to aim at any goal less than Him is to sin and fall short of the glory of God." (their italics)

In reply to this, it may be stated that there is a clear New Testament brand of teaching about discipline. The second sentence is correct, but the first is a grave error. It must be repeated that God's standard is distinctly and explicitly set out in the form of command and admonition, as in Mt.chs.5-7 and Eph.ch.4.v.25 - ch.6.v.4, to name but two texts. Indeed all of Paul's shorter letters contain sections dealing with the conduct of the Christian. It is precisely this failure to accept that God's standard is concrete and expressed in specific commands (laws) that has resulted in recent attempts by some to justify practices that are forbidden by God in the New Testament. The authors claim that:

"Whereas the old covenant law demanded 'You must', Jesus' new

commandments promise that 'You will'."

Whilst one can appreciate their desire to break away from legalism, there is no scriptural justification for the latter half of this statement. Coates and Thompson refute allegations that they are antinomian:

"We emphatically disagree: we have in fact written a truly evangelical a-nomian treatise (meaning 'no law'). For when the believer properly fulfills the law he renders it obsolete."  
(their italics)

However, 1 Jn.ch.3.v.4 defines sin not as anti-nomia, but precisely as a-nomia: it is a disregard of God's law that constitutes sin, and that is the inevitable outcome in practice of the theory presented by the authors. They cite Gal.ch.4.v.30 in substantiation of their claim that:

"Grace and Law will never settle for peaceful co-existence. One must be evicted."

Once again, this is a faulty application of the text, and shows no attempt to come to grips with the Bible's teaching about the necessary relationship between law and grace. The authors accept that:

"God in sovereign grace often blesses us in our legalistic routine. But let us not draw the false conclusion that our restrictive practices merit his blessings."

They believe that keeping all the traditions and breaking God's law of liberty in the process is wrong, whereas adhering to the law of liberty and breaking with tradition is legitimate. These are valid points. Coates and Thompson also maintain that Paul apparently went back on his principles by subjecting himself to a ritual vow in Jerusalem:

"... as a man of the Spirit Paul was led to curtail his freedom and to submit to the leadership of the church where he was the guest."



They accept this as a principle which they have themselves practised on appropriate occasions. Although not pinpointing a particular experience, Coates and Thompson are in effect advocating a total sanctification similar to that of the Holiness Movements. Their teaching has been taken up by numerous people and its influence is apparent in the writings of others.

Not Under Law states that Christians should observe "a seven day a week spiritual sabbath" as in Heb.chs.3 and 4, and that whatever a Christian wants to do on Sunday, "the New Testament tells him to feel utterly free to do so". This prepares the way for Nick Butterworth's persuasive treatise Sunday and the Rest<sup>16</sup>, the initial principle of which is as follows:

"In every case Jesus takes the commandment and gives to it a meaning far more searching than that which is revealed in the actual words. He not only upholds the commandments, but expands on them and shows that a full appreciation of God's standards requires more than a literal interpretation of the commandments."

This is a sound principle, but the author goes on to ignore his own words about the upholding of the commandments and does away with literal interpretation. The balance of the above statement is thereby lost. Butterworth speaks of the failure to understand the deeper meaning that God intended the Sabbath to have: with its basic meaning of 'resting' or 'ceasing', it is a signpost in the Old Testament, a type of:

"... the rest into which a person enters when he ceases trying to earn God's favour by his own effort, and instead trusts solely in that which Jesus has done for him ... The deepest significance of the Sabbath is this: that it is possible to enter into an eternal rest, a ceasing from trying to please God, and a resting on the fact that we are accepted in Jesus ... This rest is not just theoretical, but has an effect on our lives which is observable."

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16. Nick Butterworth: Sunday and the Rest. Private publication.

This is based upon Heb.chs.3 and 4, and so far one can agree. However, it is at this point that the influence of the teaching of Not Under Law becomes apparent:

"Grace turns the commandment into a certainty. How can I know this certainty? It is simply this - that it doesn't depend on me anymore ... Do we see the incredible implications of this truth? That He who gave the law is now the one who will fulfill the law in a believer's actual life. If we would only stop trying to help God out by trying to conform to the eternal pattern of the law's requirements, we would find a tremendous release in our lives. We would discover that God has actually put a real desire for Himself within us; that we don't in fact want to sin." (my italics)

Here again, biblical teaching concerning the believer's remaining sinful nature and human initiative goes unnoticed. With reference to the final sentence, it is also necessary to note that although the Christian's desire for God includes a general abhorrence of sin, the pull towards specific sin is often a different matter. But Butterworth goes a step further:

"The truth is, I am the temple of God; He dwells in me by His Spirit seven days a week and whatever I do now, I do from a position of resting in Him ... Rest is not mainly to do with the external cessation of activity; it is more basically to do with peace ... If we are walking in the Spirit in this way, we will find that we automatically strike the right balance in terms of mental and physical output and relaxation. (This will lead to God's people becoming healthy as well as joyful. In every way we will become whole.) This balance can not be ensured by our rigorous efforts to implement the law of resting ... the new life we have received if left to itself really does not commit sin." (my italics)

Holiness and sanctification are thus regarded as an automatic process in which the believer is carried along to a smooth culmination. Apart from accepting the premises that will provide entry into the process, the

Christian apparently has no part to play, and this is unbiblical. Butterworth believes that Jesus was in this state of 'continued rest' and one may assume that he means by this that Jesus automatically achieved the "right balance" of the above quotation. Once again, this is not supported by Scripture, and indeed the latter shows that Jesus was often weary and that His divine nature was fused with His human nature and all that the latter entailed. Such teaching in relation both to Jesus and to Man has certain docetic overtones. This is not to say that everything in Sunday and the Rest is erroneous. Butterworth's assertion that Sunday for the Christian should be no different to any other day of the week may be commendable in some aspects. He does, however, mean this to be understood in more tangible terms, stating that there should be a clearer recognition of the differences between the Old and New covenants, for much of what has gone under the name of the New Covenant is in fact a confusing combination of both. Christians are themselves the Church and the Temple of God, yet they erect buildings and go on special days to meet with Him. Butterworth feels that the Old Covenant is thus being needlessly perpetuated by the people of the New Covenant, and that there is little encouragement in this to rest in the grace of God. But the continuous walk of a believer with God is legitimately stressed and on a practical level the following statement makes good sense:

"... the principle remains that the sabbath was made for man and individuals will need to take their breaks in different ways to know the most benefit."

In spite of a number of legitimate points, however, the fact remains that Coates and Thompson and those who have followed them have over-reacted against imbalance, have produced unbiblical teaching, and have fallen into serious error. The view of the Christian life which they promulgate is both unbiblical and unrealistic, and these books have been strongly criticised from several quarters. After two editions of Not Under Law, the authors mutually agreed that it should not be reprinted. Hugh Thompson in particular now feels that although the book was necessary at the time it was written, it was not a complete statement<sup>17</sup>, and he is now involved in

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17. Interview with Hugh Thompson. February 1981.

The place of divine discipline in the life of a Christian is emphasised, and it is pointed out that this is beneficial and necessary for Christian growth. This teaching is therefore presented not in a negative and discouraging way, as the critics have claimed, but in a manner which traces the purpose of God in the fact that there is no instant sanctity for any Christian. Furthermore, it recognises the wonder in the relationship He has allowed to develop between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit on the path to holiness.

Throughout the Charismatic Movement, there has been a noticeable concern to dissolve the divide between the sacred and the secular, a concern which has in the past decade been characteristic of Christianity as a whole and is not limited to those who have experienced charismatic renewal. Many denominational charismatics state that they benefit from traditional observances - church attendance on Sundays, regular personal times of prayer and Bible study, attendance at a set pattern of weekly meetings - and believe that there is a certain value in the discipline of applying this kind of routine to their lives. Fullness magazine has, however, identified the breakdown of the sacred/secular divide with freedom from the requirements of attending meetings and continuing with traditional practices. Maurice Smith writes:

"It is good to see that the artificial barriers between sacred and secular are beginning to crumble as the move of the Spirit continues. It is taking many of us some time to adjust to this, impeded as we are by traditional thinking which urges us to keep our holy days, to eat and drink special things and to hold fast to our special buildings for worship ..."

"The list of ways in which we segment our lives is almost too numerous to contemplate ..."<sup>20</sup>

Consequently one finds what amounts to an obsession with freedom and flexibility in some house churches. Many actually make a point of not

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20. Maurice Smith: "Sacred and Secular". Fullness Vol.13. p.6.

the leadership of the Bradford Circle, which places considerable emphasis upon Christian discipline and duty. Gerald Coates continues to stand by the teaching of this book, although he would perhaps rephrase or delete some things which he feels did not make much contribution to the thrust of the message<sup>18</sup>. He denies that he is antinomian, maintaining that he is simply putting the law in its correct perspective and that the book has been of great help to many Christians:

"Where the book has been read most and put into practice, I find not only individuals but whole communities, who are a lot easier to live with than the average Christian community."

The basic premises of Not Under Law underlie much of the Fullness Circle self-understanding and thought. Just as the issue of authority and discipline has helped to accentuate the divide between house churches and denominations, so the contrast between the lifestyle associated with Not Under Law exponents and that which is more typical of Christians in established denominations has further polarized relations between the two. Charismatics within the established denominations have tended to adhere firmly to the position which rejoices in the Christian's freedom from slavery to sin, yet recognises that the desires of sinful human nature are still there within him and may cause him to be tempted towards their fulfillment. Dunamis takes a clear line on this:

"In spite of our sonship, there is a natural tendency, after a time, to turn back to old ways, perhaps to try to have the best of both worlds. The slavery to sin has a sort of gravitational pull from which we do not fully escape in our new found freedom..."

"We have to recognise that our human nature, with its natural desires, is frequently opposed to what the Spirit wants ..." <sup>19</sup>

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18. For a more detailed reply by Gerald Coates to his critics, see Q & A with G.C.. Private publication. pp.18-20.

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19. John Ashby: "From Slaves of Sin, To Sons of God". Dunamis No.35. April 1981. p.14.

meeting on Sundays, and leave their members free to decide what is for each one the most beneficial way for them to spend the day. This may range from playing football to staying in bed, and one house church became known in its town as "The Monopoly Church" because its members took to playing Monopoly on a Sunday in order to demonstrate that they were not bound by legalistic Sunday observance. Another was so concerned about maintaining flexibility in church life that what meetings it did have were re-scheduled every few months just in case the church was becoming enslaved to a set pattern. Freedom from legalism was seen to be a priority and some members spent some time analysing their current situations to see if they were becoming enslaved without realising it.

A certain confusion is evident here. The desire to break down the barriers between the sacred and the secular results in either a merging of the two, or a total jettisoning of 'the sacred'. Provided biblical standards are applied - which it is by no means always easy to do - then the bringing of the secular under the Lordship of Christ is a desirable task for the Church. However, in some cases it appears that what has actually happened is that the sacred has been submerged by the secular. Acknowledgement of the sacred has been wrongly equated with legalism and therefore done away with, and this is illustrated by the words of Maurice Smith above. In some house churches there appears to have developed in some people's lives what amounts to a secularized Christianity, and this is accompanied by a vagueness about prayer and communion with God which is defended by the pantheistic notion that "God is everywhere and so I am in touch with him all the time". Such is the concern in some groups to escape from a bondage to legalism that this is replaced somewhat pathetically by a bondage to freedom which dominates their life as much as legalism might dominate that of others. Where such a situation does exist, it is a very unbalanced state of affairs, and other house churches have joined with those in the denominations in expressing concern about it.

Once again, the problem really revolves around the maintenance of a biblical balance. and in this case it concerns the two opposites of legality and licence, both of which can be detrimental if they fail to be balanced by the other. To which is the Charismatic Movement leaning? It must be stressed that it would be misleading to generalize for every

fellowship or church involved. By no means every house church, for example, shows evidence of the worrying tendencies noted above. The prevailing opinion amongst leaders in the Charismatic Movement does, however, seem to be that there is an urgent need for more emphasis upon holiness in the lives of participants. Pithy comments have predominated in this field where detailed biblical exposition and teaching could perhaps have taken their place. The oft-quoted remark by Juan Carlos Ortiz that the speed of a person's car tells more about his doctrine than does the cast of his millennialism may have its point, but clear biblical teaching is needed as the basis upon which standards of personal holiness can be grounded. Michael Harper has recognised this deficiency in the Charismatic Movement. In the early years of the movement he had already remarked that the New Testament places much more emphasis on holiness and the life of self-discipline than on exorcism<sup>21</sup>, and he concluded As At The Beginning with a section on "The Holiness of the Believer", in which he warned against making Pentecost and the baptism of the Spirit central<sup>22</sup>. But in 1980, he sought to draw people's attention in a more direct way to some of the stark realities of the Charismatic Movement:

"One of the refreshing features of the Charismatic Renewal has been its freedom from legalism, and its tolerance. In its early days people who normally frowned on smoking and drinking had to get used to nicotine addicted Charismatics and whisky drinking Roman Catholics. But as the years have gone by one has begun to wonder whether the pendulum has not swung rather too far in the opposite direction and whether this has not in part been due to a subtle retreat from Christian behaviour standards. The charismatic world has been rocked from time to time by scandals relating to adultery, divorce, homosexuality, alcoholism and financial dishonesty, and one has to ask the question, was this due to a superficial attitude to moral standards in the scripture

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21. Michael Harper: Walk In The Spirit. Hodder and Stoughton. 1968. p.57.

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22. Michael Harper: As At The Beginning. Hodder and Stoughton. 1965. pp.125-127.

brought on by a fear of a return to legalism? Tolerance can go too far and lapse into moral licentiousness." <sup>23</sup>

In 1976, Tom Smail wrote that it had become increasingly clear that holiness needed to be the next major item requiring the concentration of Christians in the Charismatic Movement. Noting that the present renewal, unlike preceding ones, did not start with that emphasis, and that the new experience of the Spirit brought many a necessary liberation from law, he asserted that the Holy Spirit's work of empowering can be distinguished but never finally separated from His work of sanctifying. The gifts of the Spirit should be seen in connection with the fruit of the Spirit, and Paul's writings show how it is quite possible to be both charismatic and carnal, a situation which results in the corruption and contamination of the genuine gift by the character of the person who exercises it. The problem at Corinth which prevented the charismatic gifts from edifying the church and glorifying Jesus is defined by Smail as one of "unsanctified immaturity", and he feels that this situation may be repeating itself today in the Charismatic Movement. Like Harper, he speaks of promiscuity, unreliability in commitment, and dishonest exaggeration and self-deception in claims made, which could bring the whole movement into disrepute. Furthermore, flaws in character and disposition weaken ministries, disturb relationships, and lead people into dangerous realms of unreality in which they proclaim to others what is being blatantly contradicted in their own lives. A deep concern with holiness is necessary to rectify the situation, and here Smail uses Wesley's term in advocating a "scriptural holiness" <sup>24</sup>. In his last editorial of Renewal <sup>25</sup> as he moved on from the directorship of the Fountain Trust, Tom Smail recorded his belief that the Charismatic Movement, as a thing in itself, was just about over. In succession to the

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23. Michael Harper: Charismatic Crisis. Private publication. 1980. p.15.

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24. op.cit.7

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25. Tom Smail: Editorial ("Convictions"). Renewal No.82. Aug/Sept.1979. p.4.



"charismatic phase" he believed that there would come a deeper and wider renewal in the Church in which the holiness of the new humanity of Christians and obedient availability to God would be at the centre of concern. In his latest book, The Forgotten Father<sup>26</sup>, he repeats his view that charismatic circles have lacked emphasis on holiness and sanctification.

A deficiency in the area of holiness is not confined merely to the Charismatic Movement, but is causing concern amongst numerous church leaders. Whether the situation will be rectified, remains to be seen. Perhaps the most likely people to take a clear initiative in this are some of the house churches. The Bradford Circle in particular has immense influence in both house churches and denominations, and there are signs that it is already leading the way. But will holiness be identified primarily with obedience and submission to leaders, a "revitalized cult of obedience" in the words of Rene Laurentin? This underlines the need for sound biblical exegesis and teaching to correct present error or neglect, and to avoid the faulty doctrines of the past.

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26. Tom Smail: The Forgotten Father. Hodder and Stoughton. 1980.

Chapter 11.AUTHORITY AND DISCIPLINE

This is an area which has been explored afresh by the Charismatic Movement, and these explorations have often resulted in intense debate and controversy, both within the movement and in the rest of the Church. Michael Harper has observed that if there is one main area of controversy in the Charismatic Movement, it is that of authority. He considers that not only do most of the major differences found in the movement stem from this area, but that so too do most of the aberrations<sup>1</sup>. However, the provoking of so much controversy by the Charismatic Movement's treatment of this topic has by no means been completely unhealthy. The charismatics have in fact turned their attention to a sorely neglected area in the life of the Church and if their conclusions have on occasions caused uproar, they have also stimulated and contributed to a long overdue reassessment of the nature and function of authority and discipline in the Church. In a chapter concerned with ministry and leadership, David Watson writes:

"It is probably here, more than in any other area of the Church's life, that we need to look with fresh understanding and re-examine, critically and biblically, the traditional patterns that have been passed down to us over the centuries." 2

It has been with this purpose that participants in the Charismatic Movement have examined this area of Church life and have endeavoured to put into practice the varying results of their deliberations. This has led to a complex and sometimes confusing situation. Within the Protestant denominational churches, one finds charismatics on the one hand who retain a loyalty and respect for their denominational leaders and local ministers,

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1. Michael Harper: This Is The Day. Hodder and Stoughton. 1979. p.81.

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2. David Watson: I Believe In The Church. Hodder and Stoughton. 1979. p.245.

and on the other those who feel unable to accept the authority of somebody who has not known a baptism in the Spirit experience, and may be at best unsympathetic and at worst hostile to the charismatic position. Those who fit into this second group may maintain an uneasy presence in their churches, looking not to the authority of their own minister but to that of a 'charismatic' minister in another church or to one of the travelling 'apostles' of a house church grouping. Suspicions and hostilities often result, and such situations have sometimes culminated in accusations by the denominational churches of 'sheep-stealing' on the part of the house churches. Such exercising of authority over people who, technically at least, are under the authority and guidance of somebody else causes further confusion in an already sensitive area, and a clash of loyalties on the part of the person under two authorities has sometimes led to disorientation and disillusionment in their Christian life. For those people actually within the house churches, their acceptance of whatever authority operates in their circle ensures that they will not face such dilemmas. However, it is in the house churches that the worst excesses of authority and submission have been reported, and no small number have emerged badly scarred by their experiences, to rejoin established denominational churches and attempt to settle again into a system which they had previously rejected. In the Catholic sphere of the movement, the situation is more stable, simply because the majority of charismatics have retained their respect and submission to their ecclesiastical authorities, a situation which, although somewhat precariously maintained by both sides on occasions, shows no sign at the present time of undergoing any significant change. Nevertheless, because of the fluctuations which affect the Charismatic Movement with regard to authority and discipline, the general picture is one of turbulence, and whilst varying theories are being put in practice, the resolution of differences and contradictions must remain somewhere in the future. Heribert Muhlen's words in 1978 remain true:

"One of the most difficult problems for the future of the charismatic movement as it has occurred in the major mainstream Christian Churches in the middle of the present century is that of Church leadership, discipline and order." 3

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3. Heribert Muhlen: A Charismatic Theology. Burns and Oates. 1978. p.295.

Misunderstandings and vagueness over terminology have added to the problems in this area too. Once again, different people may use the same term but mean different things by it. 'Disciplining', for example, may be used with the intention of referring to a general biblical principle and not to the closely defined and strictly applied system with which it has often been associated. The designation of the title 'apostle' upon certain leaders may also mean any number of things, and many of the people who use this term would vehemently disagree with each other about the interpretations to be placed upon it. In its use of biblical terms, the Charismatic Movement has often either applied them too loosely or taken them out of context with insufficient regard for the complex task of ascertaining their contemporary application.

The people who have occupied positions of leadership in the Charismatic Movement, the 'charismatic leaders' as such, should not be confused with the type of 'charismatic leader' to which the term applies in the popular sense. Although a leader in the Charismatic Movement may well have this personal magnetism and presence with which to draw the crowds and hold their attention, there is usually more involved than this. They generally exercise several of the charismatic gifts, notably prophecy, speaking in tongues, the words of wisdom and knowledge, and the discerning of spirits, and in addition to these, personal qualities make them particularly appropriate for positions of leadership. The majority of the contemporary leaders became involved in the Charismatic Movement in its earliest days and found themselves functioning as leaders through circumstance rather than by deliberate intention. However, as the movement progressed, they became increasingly experienced, and continued naturally as leaders since they were the ones most suitably qualified. Although some could be described as forceful personalities, others are quiet and undemonstrative, and it would be inaccurate to attempt a stereotype. These leaders have differing views of their own authority. In the Catholic movement and the renewal in the established Protestant denominations, the leaders tend to regard themselves simply as leaders, serving the purpose of teaching and advising people who nevertheless remain fully under the authority of their local church. In the house churches, however, the break has been made with previously existing church structures, and the leadership assumes a definite authoritative role.

Whatever their views on the authority of the leader, most people stress that the Charismatic Movement needs wise and strong leadership. Michael Harper advises that ministers and lay officials present at charismatic meetings should exercise "discreet discipline" with regard to the public manifestation of the charismatic gifts<sup>4</sup>. From his own experience he gives an example where discipline was necessary to stop a young man who got up to prophesy in a meeting but was felt by many there to be merely expressing his own feelings<sup>5</sup>. The laying on of hands is mentioned in particular as a ministry which is open to abuse and should be carefully ordered in the churches. Harper recommends that the minister and other leaders in each church should specify which persons are to exercise this ministry<sup>6</sup>. He is also realistic in recognising the difficult situations often encountered by ministers, in which they find themselves 'umpiring' between two sides and consequently under strong attack from both<sup>7</sup>. Harper is clearly placing authority in the hands of existing church leaders, and this has been typical of the Fountain Trust's attitude over the years. A charismatic group developing in a local church should do so with the knowledge and permission of the ministers and elders<sup>8</sup>, and it was a principle of Harper's work in the Fountain Trust never to enter a church to speak under false pretences, always respecting the views of the ministers. He would not teach anything which was liable to bring confusion and division to a church, believing that the pace should not be forced, but

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4. Michael Harper: As At The Beginning. Hodder and Stoughton. 1965. pp.124-125.

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5. Michael Harper: None Can Guess. Hodder and Stoughton. 1971. p.82.

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6. Michael Harper: Walk In The Spirit. Hodder and Stoughton. 1968. p.75.

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7. op.cit.4. p.123.

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8. op.cit.6. p.88.

that God's timing should be adhered to<sup>9</sup>.

In his discussion concerning the nature of ministry, Harper points out that its authority should be the authority of service, as Christ delegated it, and not the authority of tyranny. Jesus was concerned primarily with growth rather than with the establishment of a spiritual bureaucracy to run the Church. The function of ministry was therefore more important than the office, and in Harper's view this allows for a certain flexibility in style of ministry<sup>10</sup>. He feels that leadership in the Church should come about fairly naturally with the gifted leadership coming gradually to "the top of the pile", and believes in a team ministry with the team coming under the leadership of one of their number. The five-fold ministry of Eph.ch.4.v.11 - apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers - should normally be seen in the group of elders who lead a local church, and whilst few people will be individually proficient in all five areas, the more gifted leaders will normally show a balanced understanding of them, as well as a general aptitude in most and a brilliance in some. Those who have gifts which ought to be made available to the wider Church are the people who should be elevated to the episcopate, and bishops today should not merely be "establishment figures", but adventurous leaders. The qualities necessary in a bishop and, by extension, presumably any Christian leader are as follows:

" ... bishops should be prophetic in their understanding of the church and of the world, able to understand how God sees things and to see into the future, so that the Church does not lag behind but is always up-to-date and relevant. They need pastoral gifts, and the ability to handle people. They should be able to teach and to grasp the wholeness of Christian doctrine, so that they can uphold the truth and refute error and false teaching. They should have charismatic abilities and be leaders in

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9. op.cit.5. pp.86,87-88.

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10. Michael Harper: Let My People Grow. Hodder and Stoughton. 1977. p.104.

evangelism. No one person can be outstanding in all these areas; but, provided the principle of collegiality is adopted, others can fill in where there are weaknesses." <sup>11</sup>

This discussion is obviously placed within an Anglican context, but it is representative of charismatics in differing denominations who seek to accommodate their view of ministry and authority within the structures that already operate in their own tradition.

Others share Harper's understanding of the nature of Christian authority. A Renewal Study Section<sup>12</sup> examined the Biblical concept of spiritual authority, noting that this was expressed by the terms  $\delta\upsilon\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$ , meaning 'efficient force' and  $\epsilon\zeta\upsilon\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha$ , meaning 'authority'. This 'authority' is power which is exercised on the basis of right, a right which is recognised by the person over whom it is exercised. Smail links together Mt.ch.28.v.18 and Acts ch.1.v.8 to show that Jesus offered to His disciples not just the ability to get things done but a share of His own right to rule.  $\delta\upsilon\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$  must always be understood in terms of  $\epsilon\zeta\upsilon\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha$ , for spiritual power is exercised correctly and safely only when it has the right credentials and is backed up by the right authority. Smail describes 'authority' in the New Testament sense as "a sandwich word", and by this he means that the man in authority always has both someone over him and someone under him. The story of the centurion in Lk.ch.7.vv.1-10 is used as an illustration of this principle. Smail states that in the life of God Himself there is both an 'over' and an 'under': whilst the Father is the ultimate source and possessor of all authority, there is also in God the obedience of the Son, who does not His own will but the Father's. It is therefore as divine to obey as it is to command, God Himself illustrating this by doing both. It is then firmly stated that obedience towards God is the only source of

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11. op.cit.10. pp.203-205.

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12. Tom Smail: "Renewal Study Section ("Authority, Submission, Discipleship"). Renewal No.65. Oct/Nov. 1976.

spiritual authority over man. The man who seeks power over others without being submitted in obedience to God is imposing himself and his personality upon people, which results in the domination and bondage of people to himself rather than their liberation for God and others. Jesus exercised authority in several ways, the calling of disciples (Mk.ch.1.v.17), the casting out of unclean spirits (Mk.ch.1.v.27), the forgiveness of sins and healing of bodies (Mk.ch.2.vv.10-12), and the subduing and commanding of the natural elements (Mk.ch.4.vv.39-41). Smail claims that Jesus shares with His disciples such authority in all these realms (Mk.ch.4.v.15, Jn.ch.14.v.2, Jn.ch.20.v.23, Mk.ch.16.vv.17-18), but adds that it must rest upon the same basis, be exercised in the same way and be fundamentally rooted in obedience to God. From this basis he goes on to describe the nature of Christian authority derived from Christ. Firstly, it is for the service of others (Lk.ch.22.v.27) and the mature self-denial of leaders is to be an example to those they lead (1 Pet.ch.5.v.3). Secondly, it both creates and works through the free recognition and consent of those who are subject to it. Jesus spoke the truth in a way that made people think for themselves, and trusted that the Spirit of truth would give His word and life convicting power and win discernment, consent and decision. Furthermore, He did not exert forcefulness, but called and relied upon the inherent authority of His call to elicit the free response He sought. Thirdly, it rests upon the right of one called by God and who gives himself to God for others. Christian authority is never derived from institutional position or personal magnetism. Rather it is the authority of those who have responded to God's call, offering themselves as servants of God's people which elicits the free submission of those who in the Spirit discern their calling and recognise their authority (Acts ch.6.vv.5-6; ch.13.vv.2-3). Jesus provides the model which should be constantly referred to in order to ensure that authority is right and just.

A leader of the Bradford house church stated too that the leaders in a church have a measure of Christ's authority, and he pointed out that this is a very solemn responsibility for those concerned. Heb.ch.13.v.17 teaches that an elder is called upon to give double account to God, not just for himself but also for his exercise of authority. Authority that is exercised as Scripture directs should not breed dependence, but should work towards the maturing of a person and encourage them to make their own



decisions. The function of the Church in this sphere is to demonstrate to the world that there is an authority based on relationships (a point to be particularly stressed in today's anonymous society) that is firm yet kind and considerate and exercised for the benefit of people<sup>13</sup>. Submission to this authority is by a person's own decision, and it involves the deepening of a relationship which is to involve support and encouragement on the part of both parties, as well as submission by one.

The Renewal Study Section continues by considering what the New Testament has to say about submission to authority. Eph.ch.5.v.21 (cf. 1 Pet.ch.5.v.3) provides the main statement about submission within the Christian fellowship which bears out what has preceded. Smail notes that the context of this submission is not legal structure, but being filled with the Spirit which leads to the possession of authority in the self and the recognition of it in others. The motive for submission, moreover, is not legal requirement or church law, but discernment of the presence of Christ in the person to whom one submits. Also, the submission is mutual in that at times A will submit to B, and at others B will submit to A when A is exercising the gift, ministry or function that God has given him. The whole body thus submits to the whole body. The New Testament speaks of submission in many contexts (to God, to Christ, wives to husbands, to parents, to employers, to civil authorities, to leaders in the Church), and this is always to the one who is exercising the authoritative gift, ministry or function that God has given him. Smail emphasises again that this is not to be solidified into a legal system where a few dominate over many, but is to be left in the free dynamic movement of the Spirit manifesting Himself in all the members in different ways.

The above provides a detailed presentation of the teaching of Scripture, as interpreted in many charismatic circles. But what of the question of discipleship, the practice of making 'disciples' of other Christians in order to aid their spiritual growth? This is a topic which has given rise to much debate, and Smail provides an addendum on discipleship in which he examines its New Testament basis. He points out

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13. Interview with leaders of the Bradford House Church. February 1981.

that Mt.ch.28.v.19 commissions the making of disciples for the ascended Jesus and not for men, the New Testament concept of a disciple being of someone who is not in a relationship of dependence on any human leader, but who is a member of the Church, and thus in subjection to Christ. (It is made clear in Acts.ch.11.v.26 that disciples are Christians.) Smail is fully aware of possible dangers here, cautioning as he does against the devising of 'discipleship programmes' as such. He cites 1 Cor.ch.3.vv.4-6 as an example of care being taken to avoid the gathering of disciples round a particular person. Nevertheless, Jesus's methods in gathering and training his first disciples "remain of permanent relevance in the Church in bringing men to maturity and training them for service."

It is when these principles are to be applied and worked out, however, that the problems arise, and nowhere is this more clearly illustrated than in the 'Discipling Controversy' which caused a crisis in the American Charismatic Movement in 1975 and had repercussions throughout the world. Michael Harper provides a detailed account of these events in This Is The Day<sup>14</sup>, describing it as "far and away the most disturbing controversy to hit the Charismatic Movement". Within the American movement by 1975, there had developed in addition to denominational groupings a definite non-denominational stream which consisted of two main groupings, the independent churches (such as Melodyland structure in Anaheim, California) and the Christian Growth Ministries of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The Discipling Controversy consisted of a violent confrontation within the non-denominational scene, with some Protestant and Classical Pentecostals also involved. Harper notes that "charismatic empire building" had been going on for many years, and that the issue of discipleship provided the catalyst.

The controversy resulted from the teaching of Juan Carlos Ortiz, an Argentinian pastor, at the Christian Growth Ministries conference for 'Shepherds' at Montreat, North Carolina, in 1974. Some of this teaching was adopted and expanded by the C.G.M. in response to the needs they saw in the current American Charismatic Movement. Harper comments:

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14. Michael Harper: This Is The Day. Hodder and Stoughton. 1979. pp.94-96.

"Someone has defined cancer as 'exuberant growth without relationship to order'. It could also pass as a description of some aspects of the charismatic renewal in America. It has produced thousands of nomadic Christians, or sheep without shepherds, and there has been little thought for order and authority. For many it has meant spiritual anarchy, and the casualties have been numerous. It is this kind of situation that prompted the C.G.M. to bring a new emphasis on shepherding, discipling and authority."

The Roman Catholic charismatics were stressing the same thing, but whereas they were concerned largely with para-church structures, the C.G.M. were concerned mainly with churches, and regarded these principles as mandatory on all Christians. The C.G.M. was considered to have over-stepped the mark when it was discovered that it was distinguishing between ecclesiastical (lip-service) authority and spiritual authority (the real thing). It was 'discipling' members of other churches and claiming spiritual authority over people who lived hundreds of miles away, and this was involving funds by-passing the churches and going to the 'shepherds'. Fortunately, a workable solution was found within a year, and in December 1975 a group of leaders met for theological and pastoral evaluation of the controversy over discipling and shepherding, the breach finally being healed.

Most of the Charismatic Movement outside America had sufficient warning to be able to avoid the worst features of this controversy, not least of which Harper considers to be the open denunciation of some charismatics by others. Certainly, the controversy was not so widespread in Britain, and the fact that the British Charismatic Movement was at that time mainly within the established churches as opposed to para-church structures made it highly unlikely that the same problems would have arisen. The attitude of British charismatics, who, in the main, were happy to comply with the ecclesiastical authority structures in which they found themselves, contrasted with the largely pessimistic attitude of American charismatics to institutional Christianity in general and denominational churches in particular. The particular American emphasis upon individualism was also bound to be extremely aggravated by the principles

of discipling<sup>15</sup>. Although discipling practices of varying types were adopted by many in Britain, they were largely contained within existing church structures, and the means of oversight were thus already established with the result that excesses and imbalances could be corrected. However, it was not possible for this to happen in the house churches, for their separation from the established churches had left them somewhat adrift where authority and discipline were concerned. Finding themselves devoid of structures, and many of them having reacted against these in their departure from the denominations, a paradoxical situation arose. They instituted their own structures, which were frequently extremely rigid and equipped with no safeguards beyond a particular leader at the top of the pyramid. It is within such groups that the worst excesses and imbalances have been reported, and this has given rise to the controversies concerning discipleship in Britain.

Michael Harper comments upon the significance of the Discipling Controversy:

"It was the 'discipling' controversy which was the catalyst which changed the whole direction of the Charismatic Renewal. It divided the movement right down the middle. It produced a totally new climate. The two parts, which we can label 'conservative' and 'radical', have continued in the succeeding five year period to move further and further apart."<sup>16</sup>

Whereas the 'conservatives' continued much as before, the 'radicals' took the issue of discipling much more seriously, recognising that it involved a more serious approach to the Christian life. In particular, people grappled afresh with the doctrine of the Church, with the function and expression of the Body of Christ, and with the issues concerning authority

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15. op.cit.14. pp.33-35.

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16. Michael Harper: Charismatic Crisis. Private publication. 1980. p.4.

and Christian growth.

In order to understand the development and implications of discipling, it is necessary to examine the original teaching of Juan Carlos Ortiz<sup>17</sup>. His innovational teaching about discipling arose out of his conviction that the structure and organization of the contemporary Church are wrong, and need to be reorganized in accordance with biblical principles. In addition to this, the growth of believers into Christian maturity is actually impeded by the Church. Discipling is therefore tied in with the idea of Church growth and Christian maturity, and is the outcome of Ortiz's thought about how to overcome the problems of attaining these. His discipling teaching has been worked out in his own practical experience as a minister and in the Church which he pastored. The problem as he saw it was that in the churches, pastors were always doing the same things because people did not grow as Christians. The preliminary teachings of the Gospel were repeatedly preached, and new believers got lost because they were not brought to maturity. Although the pastor was guilty for offering nothing more than the basics, he could not be entirely to blame, for that was the way that people were being taught to minister. Ortiz thus came to question many of the procedures of ministry, and the assumptions behind them. After reading again Heb.ch.6.v.1, Ortiz realised that all his sermons and studies had been upon the themes which the Bible regarded as rudiments. Most church activities served to maintain the believers rather than perfecting them (bringing them to maturity) for the work of the ministry, and he found himself faced with the problem of how to bring about the development from 'milk-drinker' to 'meat-eater'. He interprets Heb.ch.5.v.12 as showing that the Christian is really progressing when he can teach and guide someone else to be a Christian, and here we find the seeds of his teaching on discipling. The Church is depicted in the New Testament as a building in which each brick is in its rightful place, yet today's church tends to be simply a pile of bricks, and this needs to be corrected:

" ... in God's temple, each person must know which brick is

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17. The talks given at the C.G.M conference are contained in Ortiz's book Call To Discipleship. Logos International. 1975.

under him, which brick is beside him, and which brick is going to be over him. He must be in his place."

Here we find the concept of a structural authority which is a part of discipling. Ortiz declares that the usual concept of the relationship between the pastor and the layman, which effectively leaves power and authority in the hands of the layman, is unbiblical. So too is the popular democratic concept of the Church, which becomes an excuse for the believer to do his own will, and submit to nobody. The words of the apostle Paul, "Be imitators of me as I am an imitator of Christ" are used here to show that Christians should be submitted to other Christians. The pastor should be:

"... dedicating time to place each one in his proper sphere of work, guiding him, controlling him, assigning him specific tasks and correcting the results" (my italics)

Otherwise, says Ortiz, the believers will remain continually misplaced. It is therefore necessary to advocate a structure in which the believer has a definite place and is going to learn new things, put them into practice, and grow as a Christian. However, the ability to instruct believers in this is only to be found in the more mature believer, and in connection with this, Ortiz points out that out of all the believers at Corinth, Paul baptized only the first two, Crispus and Gaius, and that they baptized the others. This is because Paul was "making disciples":

"He was not fattening the Church, he was letting it multiply."

This 'multiplication of believers' is the work of the ministry, and the minister must train his congregation to 'multiply' themselves. Following the pattern which he detected in Paul's ministry, Ortiz decided that:

"I was to challenge my members to change - to conform to the image of Jesus Christ. These are my disciples and I am to perfect them for the work of the ministry." (my italics)

In effect, Ortiz was therefore to 'multiply' himself:

"If I want to be multiplied by ten, it is not because I want ten new souls for the Lord Jesus. I want ten Juan Carlos Ortizes - ten like me."

Because Jesus multiplied Himself by twelve in His discipling, Ortiz feels it is biblical for him to do the same. One must first be made in the image of Jesus Christ in order to do this, and Ortiz acknowledges that this is an on-going process. Nevertheless, one can disciple others provided one is well on the way in this process.

"I must be like Christ, and those around me must follow, that through me they may become like Christ too." (my italics)

These quotations show that the teacher-disciple relationship is one of authority and submission. The snowballing effect of the discipling process should enable this system to solve the problems of lack of church growth and maturity in believers:

"The purpose of the pastor is to make disciples who make disciples who make disciples who make disciples."

The apostle Paul died in peace because he knew that men like Timothy, Philemon, Titus and Epaphras were carrying on his work, and this process can operate today through discipling. It is emphasised that actual growth should accompany the multiplication process:

"If I have a hundred people in my church who speak in tongues this year, and next year I have three hundred tongue speakers, and the following year four hundred - I'm not growing, I'm just getting fat."

Taking Paul's life again as an example, Ortiz shows how he progressed from being a witnessing disciple to a tongue-speaker, to an administrator, to a help for Barnabus, to a healer, to a performer of miracles, and then to a teacher and prophet, and finally to an apostle. Apostleship is really a ministry that includes all the other ministries. When disciples reach a certain stage, they are then able to progress by themselves and make

disciples of others. Ortiz wishes to avoid at all costs the inhibition of church growth, and he sees the results of discipling in terms of the following:

"Disciples who four years ago couldn't even pray out loud are now pastors of the church. This sets me free to travel up to eight months of the year. This is good since my constant presence would make me a cork in the local church."

Whereas he would once have enlisted another pastor to come in and run his church in his absence, now, through the factory-like process of discipling, he has developed many pastors to replace him.

Before going on to see how discipling worked out practically in Ortiz's church, we can note several statements made by him which show how seriously he takes the authoritative rights of the teacher and the necessary submission of the disciple. He comments that Paul accepted the challenge to say to other believers "Be ye imitators of me", and concludes from this that it is biblical for believers to issue the same challenge to other believers today. Obedience is stressed: people were willing to obey when discipleship was initially taught because "we were so full of the spirit of truth". Although initially optional, however, it seems that obedience became unquestionable. In the context of the need for hospitality for visitors to the congregation, Ortiz later states:

"We tell them, 'Brother, come, you're going to take these people to your house'. We command, we don't ask."

Ortiz constantly emphasizes the place of love amongst Christians, but the structure is nevertheless there which could comfortably accommodate a rigid authoritarianism, and this must inevitably be open to abuse. He emphasizes too that discipling is the pattern set by Jesus, and that it is therefore "the plan of God". However, this assumption may be challenged. Because Jesus employed a particular means it does not necessarily follow that Christians today should. Moreover, the uniqueness and perfection of Jesus mean that he was a unique and perfect model and that it was justifiable that He should instruct His followers in how to emulate Him. It is



debatable whether it is justifiable for imperfect human beings to do this. The assumption that Paul was "making disciples" at Corinth in the same way that discipling is practised today should also be questioned. Paul was primarily delegating responsibility to those most capable of exercising it, and so the emphasis is somewhat different.

In his presentation of the actual practice of discipling, Ortiz states that a biblical disciple is one who learns to live the life his teacher lives. Discipleship is not a communication of knowledge, but a communication of life. With his life, the disciple is then able to teach others to live the life he lives. A good and righteous life in all spheres, including home and work, is therefore essential for the teacher. Ortiz states that a method used by Jesus which he calls 'formation teaching' should be used by the teacher, and he defines this as follows:

"Formation comes not by telling people things they should know, but by commanding them to do specific things."

Learning does not come about by hearing, but by obeying. Obedience is thus the key to learning in the Kingdom of God, and rebuking is considered a part of the teaching process in discipleship. Ortiz is very much to the point about the importance of submission:

"Here is the first law of discipleship: There will be no formation of life without submission. The club-type members don't submit. It's the other way. They want the pastor to submit to them ... In the 'new Bible' the pastor is submitted to the members, but my Bible says that the people should be submitted to the pastor.

"Submission means submission, nothing less. I can form the life of my children because they submit to me."

He quotes the words of Paul to Titus:

"This speak, exhort and rebuke with all authority." (his italics)

Authority thus occupies a crucial place in the discipling process:

"The second law of discipleship is: One cannot submit to a person who is himself unsubmitted. You control your disciples - but who controls you? You rebuke your disciples - but who rebukes you?"

Authority cannot be created in one's own life:

"To have authority I must be in line with God and those whom God puts over me - maybe one, two, or three between God and me. But if I am in line, authority will pass through me to others. If I am not in line, I won't have authority."

A complex chain of authority thereby emerges, and this is an alarming development since it implies the creation of a gulf between the believer and God by providing what in effect may become intermediaries. The teacher seems to take the place of Jesus in the believer's life, and to obscure the importance of the personal relationship with Jesus and the directing of matters to Him and to the authority of the Bible.

Ortiz preached discipleship for a number of months and then began to practise it by 'discipling' a group of people and sharing every aspect of his life with them. After six months, these disciples had grown noticeably as Christians, and began to disciple others themselves. Gradually, they discovered what a church member really is: one who is not independent in the body-type membership, who unites other parts, who nurtures, sustains, and passes orders, and who provides elasticity in the body. Although he recognises that organization is a rigid thing, Ortiz believes that because in his system people are submitted to each other, it actually results in elasticity.

A firm believer in the exercise of authority in the Church, Ortiz speaks continually against democracy. He points out that the primitive church was not democratic, but theocratic, with the power coming from above, working downward from the Lord to the apostles and then the disciples. The Church did not ask for volunteers, but commanded specific

people to carry out specific tasks, and the apostles even defined the doctrine. Here, Ortiz comments:

"As a matter of fact, the Acts report that the people followed the doctrine of the apostles - not the doctrine of Jesus, but the doctrine of the apostles. The things they wrote were infallible - a concept we still believe."

It is Ortiz's belief that this special apostolic authority is applicable today to those at the head of the discipling system, and this is an aspect of teaching which has been keenly accepted by many of the house churches. Feeling that the making of disciples is one of the most controversial and misunderstood teachings of the Bible, he emphasises that his methods for making disciples are consequences of the reality of the Lordship of Christ and His love. A complex and very vigorous routine of meetings between disciples and teachers, and disciples and pupils operated throughout each week. Authority arose through spirituality, not by titles, and in discipling, love and obedience were integral to each other:

"In this kind of relationship, submission is very important. A rebellious spirit will destroy the body. Submission proves whether a person is really broken. Brokenness is not just tears: it is obedience ... In brokenness you don't have to weep. You just obey. Submission, of course, is by love."

Although some aspects of Ortiz's teaching - his stress upon the rightful place of authority in the Church, for example - provide a necessary corrective to the predominant situation in today's Church, certain dangers are evident, and subsequent events have shown fears about these to be well-founded. So complex may be the arrangements for authority and submission that a system may emerge which is excessively legalistic and intensive. Discipling is basically a radical form of leadership training, but the intensity and rigidity of the system and the demands made upon those being disciplined in terms of time alone must surely encourage an introversion within the Church. In addition, such over-emphasis may result in a lack of balance in an individual's life and affect his primary relationship with Jesus. Indeed, it would seem more accurate to talk about

a biblical basis for discipleship than for discipling. The biblical context is the making of disciples for Jesus, and whereas younger Christians have much to learn from those who are more mature in the faith, the over-emphasis of this relationship blurs the distinctiveness of Jesus and the demands which, as God, He alone is fully entitled to make of people. The interpretation and application of the biblical material which forms the basis of the discipling system must therefore remain questionable.

Whilst one must agree with Ortiz that democracy is not a biblical concept of church authority, a certain degree of democracy provides a safeguard against the misuse or abuse of authority by a fallible man or group of men. The fallibility of sinful human nature must be seriously reckoned with. For those who believe in the presence in today's church of apostles with the authority of the New Testament apostles - as many in the house churches do - this is not, in theory at least, so much of a problem. For those who do not hold to this position, however, it is a considerable problem, and the answer must lie in an authority structure which incorporates both freedom and constraint. An obvious danger inherent to rigid authority structures is that the Lordship of Jesus may be threatened by a system which focuses to such an extent on a fellow man as teacher and guide: Jesus may well become a more remote figure. In addition, a particularly alarming feature of Ortiz's teaching is that it disparages individuality and God's creation of each person distinct from others in personality, character, and being. Ortiz's teaching clearly states that a believer must in effect lose his identity and become absorbed into something else. He illustrates this by describing how a steak is digested so that it becomes part of a person, the 'conservation' between steak and gastric juices running as follows:

" 'I don't mind being in his stomach, but I want to stay as steak. I don't want to lose my individuality, my personality. I want to maintain my steak identity.'

" 'Sorry, sir. You must be dissolved and become Juan Carlos.' "

The cross is likened to an atomic bomb that must be placed right in the

basement of the believer's building:

"Pllloow! All down!"

His most oft-quoted illustration, however, is that of the mashed potatoes: God, states Ortiz, wants the many potatoes to become one bowlful of mashed potatoes. Whilst one can appreciate his desire to show through these examples how believers must be prepared to sacrifice everything and become an inseparable part of the body of Christ, his teaching lacks the biblical balance of the many distinct members functioning in reverence and harmony with each other in the body. It is this tendency to obliterate any distinction between individuals that constitutes a very dangerous element in Ortiz's teaching, and one which has resulted from a failure to apply biblically balanced principles in a specific area. Ortiz's concern over church growth is a totally valid one, and one which has been taken up by the Charismatic Movement. It echoes Michael Harper's realization that Jesus Himself was concerned with growth rather than a spiritual bureaucracy. It has already been noted that Tom Smail has emphasised that Mt.ch.28.v.19 refers to the making of disciples who are in subjection to Jesus and not in a relationship of dependence on a human being, and that he also warned against discipleship programmes. The cautions of people such as Smail have been proved well-founded by the disputes that have occurred concerning discipling, authority and submission in recent years. Many different systems of authority and discipling have been operational in the British movement, however, and whilst some of these are more strict than others, many are adaptations rather than adoptions of Ortiz's teaching. Indeed, it has been reported that Ortiz himself has regretted some aspects of his teaching and the way in which it has been developed and practised by some.

Topics concerned with authority and discipline have largely been taken up by the house churches. George Tarleton has traced the seeds of this back to 1971:

"... the Lord began to speak to us about leadership in terms of commitment and submission in the Body of Christ. This took place all around the country quite spontaneously, and was confirmed by

leaders from the Argentine and the United States." 18

Very few house churches are willing to admit to the practice of a rigid discipling system. One house church which has been widely reputed to practise it denied that this was so, and an elder described the practice as "the gruesome twosome". Undoubtedly many groups which have practised it in the past have ceased to do so, having either suffered damage and upheaval through its abuse and excesses, or come to the decision that the system lacked a biblical basis. Those groups which do continue to practise it are the exclusive, insular ones which already have a rigid authority structure, usually with one man at the top, actively discourage outside interference, and are regarded with concern by other house churches. Some house churches practise a much more informal system of discipling. It is entirely voluntary and has no structure as such, being left to the initiative of individual Christians. One group of people in such a church described discipling as "a principle of life". They felt that rebelliousness and independence are often the true motives that lie behind attacks on the subject, and that 'discipleship' has become an abused word, having acquired overtones and connotations which it should not have. 'Following' and 'learning' are what discipleship is all about, and the practice of discipling draws people together and increases understanding. In this church, individuals approach a person of their own choosing and ask to be disciplined by them, on the basis that one can only submit to somebody whom one knows, trusts, and respects. A group of people who were being 'discipled' individually described it as follows:

"It is seeing someone and wanting to be like them. You give them permission to deal with you and interfere with your life. It's like Jesus and his disciples. He's had permission to tell us if there is something in our lives he hasn't liked, and to encourage us too."

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18. George Tarleton: The Church In The House. Private publication.

The term 'discipling' is used with different meanings in different circles. In the introduction to an article in Dunamis magazine<sup>19</sup>, Ross Peart notes:

"The new movement emerging in the world-Church today is the Church Growth Movement. On examining those churches in the world which have grown one of its conclusions is that churches of all types of spirituality grow when there is a hard core nucleus of people who go more deeply together in Jesus."

This process he defines as discipling, and he goes on to list seven principles to be followed with respect to this. In the course of the article he states:

"It is commitment to the person of Jesus Christ that should be the object of Christian Discipleship - not to just learning ideas about but of being totally immersed in the spirit and ethos of the person of Jesus. We must learn to become like Christ. This is the real difference between worldly learning and following Christ."

Peart is correct here in his realization that discipleship is concerned with a relationship with Jesus, and he strikes a balance in his article between this primary relationship, and relationships with other members of the body of Christ. Close relationships between Christians are presented in terms of disciple and fellow-disciple, not disciple and teacher, and whilst the relationship between disciples is such that teaching and admonishment of each other have a place, Jesus Himself is the only teacher. This seems to be a correct understanding of discipleship and a biblically sound concept.

Many people have been impressed by some of the contents of Ortiz's book, yet disturbed by some of its attempted expressions in Britain. David Watson, for example, states that whilst the contents are worthy of serious

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19. Ross Peart: "Discipleship". Dunamis No.33. Oct. 1980. pp.4-6.

consideration, the substance needs to be based on more solid theological foundations. Amongst other things, he questions whether one can take the New Testament structure for a small local church in a small ancient city and apply this pattern strictly to the vast and highly complex cities of today<sup>20</sup>. Michael Harper regrets attempts by some to "lord it" over other Christians, and feels that some Christians have over-reacted against lack of discipline, swinging to a new totalitarian extreme which constitutes a denial of Christian liberty. There is need of a balance which will avoid both extremes, and he notes that whilst charismatics have proved in the past to be most apt at discovering new and important principles of Christian living, they have often spoilt what they have discovered by "the clumsy and immature application of the principles". Nevertheless, he regards the whole area that includes commitment, headship, submission and authority, and especially the exercise over others of authority and pastoral care, as "a vital issue of great significance and vital for Christian renewal"<sup>21</sup>.

It is the house churches which have borne the brunt of criticism concerning authority structures, and the majority are eager to explain their position, so as to correct what they feel is misunderstanding. David Mansell of the Bradford Circle has sought to defend the practice of discipling, and has undertaken to place it within the context of the Christ-centred, responsible Church<sup>22</sup>. He speaks in terms of functional relationships, seeing the terms 'authority', 'commitment', 'submission' and 'discipleship' as current expressions of these. Mansell states that the excesses reported in all these areas are unrepresentative, and he defines

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20. David Watson: review ("Becoming the real Church"). Renewal No.60. Dec/Jan. 1976. pp.10-11.

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21. Michael Harper: "Hot Issue". Renewal No.60. Dec/Jan. 1976. p.8.

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22. David Mansell: "The mutual giving and receiving that makes disciples". Renewal No.60. Dec/Jan. 1976. pp.12-14.



the actual practice of discipling as the communication to each member of the Church of the principle of life that an individual has learned from God. He contrasts the "take it or leave it" method of teaching with that of discipling:

"Good teaching by itself does not necessarily produce disciples and unless it is mixed with a basic relationship that gives the teacher the right to command his disciples (2 Thess.ch.3.v.6) it can easily yield instead addicts to the hearing of more words, mere sermon tasters."

Such discipling can only be based on a relationship of love and friendship. Because, for example, the Thessalonians knew that if necessary Paul would lay down his life for them, there was no problem of them misinterpreting Paul's motive in his commands (1 Thess.ch.2.v.8). Mansell in fact disapproves of the extreme situation where the 'everyone disciple one' method is legalistically implemented, and he points out that discipling must be based on a true spiritual relationship and the flow of life in the church. This basis is of paramount importance, for the relationship of teacher and disciple should be natural and without pressure. A deeper level of sharing than rests simply on the basis of teaching and commanding is emphasised. This would be "in itself a contradiction of the very principle God is seeking to establish". Where the Church is living together in unity and commitment to Christ, there discipling has a place. Submission is a spirit, an attitude, and not a grudging subjugation of one's personality and activity to another. And on the part of the teacher:

"If a father will not give a stone to a son who asks for bread, neither will a true teacher ask his disciple to clean his car at midnight simply for the kick of being in authority."

An authority which will usurp another's identity or is capricious in its demands is immoral. Mansell sees the processes of discipling and being disciplined, and the results of these, as involvement in the practicalities of life, a putting into practice of the effects of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, without which the purposes of the baptism go unfulfilled. Discipling can lead the Church on to maturity, and, he states, when one

sees the Church practising discipling on the foundations of unity and functional relationships, fears about over-submission and abuse of authority are seen as the exceptions to be rooted out. The title of Mansell's article speaks for itself and sets the tone for what follows.

Many house churches have a corporate leadership which ensures that each leader is subject to the 'covering' - the guidance and oversight - of another leader. No one leader is thus regarded as infallible, and big decisions are normally brought before the whole church anyway. Once again, it is the exclusive groups and communities which do not have these safeguards. Discipline is exercised in much the same way as in many denominational churches. Holiness and morality are stressed, and within the close-knit relationships of the fellowships, immediate correction is made if there is something wrong in the life or attitude of a person. Exclusion from the Church usually operates as in the New Testament for unrepentant immorality and unrepentant divisiveness, and exclusion is pronounced by the elders. Michael Harper has recently stated that the greatest strength of the house churches is in their pastoral system, "sometimes called discipling":

"... even if (it) is sometimes too restrictive, (it) is normally rather more satisfactory than the casual, hit-and-miss, and sometimes negligent pastoral care within some of the historic churches." <sup>23</sup>

Whereas the controversy concerning the doctrine and practice of discipling has largely died down, the subject of leadership, authority and discipline is still a major issue. Now that the subject has progressed from the initial controversy of discipling, attention has turned instead to the ministry of men who are designated apostles and prophets. Whilst the Charismatic Movement has not been the first to stress these ministries<sup>24</sup> it

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23. Michael Harper: editorial ("The house church Challenge"). Renewal No.96. Dec/Jan. 1982. p.4.

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24. The Apostolic Church of Classical Pentecostalism has placed great importance upon these ministries. See T.N. Turnbull: What God Hath Wrought. Puritan Press. 1959.

has nevertheless been the first to attract such widespread attention in connection with them. Once again, it is the house churches which have ventured into this particular area with their emphasis upon the ministry of present-day apostles and prophets. Dealing firstly with apostles, we may note the great importance attached to their ministry:

"Because it is the plan of God that we should all be, directly or indirectly, on the receiving end of apostolic ministry, it is tremendously important that we understand what apostles are and how they function." <sup>25</sup>

The Bradford House Church defines today's apostle in the following way:

"An apostle is a big man in spiritual terms. He can see the overall 'shape' of a church situation and has authority and wisdom from God to re-direct it, to spot areas of weakness and to appoint leaders ...

"The apostle will be a man of initiative, sparking off new projects and breaking open new ground with the gospel. He will have the ready following of other leaders and be a constant source of inspiration to them." <sup>26</sup>

The Bradford House Church is not alone in its use of apostolic teams to oversee churches connected with it. This church feels that it is in the same situation as the church at Syrian Antioch, in that it is the base for a team of apostles who have received God's 'anointing' and been called upon to travel throughout Britain and overseas. The members believe firmly that the office and ministry of apostle is operative today, and they find this clearly substantiated by Scripture. Noting that Eph.ch.2.v.20 states that apostles are part of the foundation of the Church, and that it is nowhere

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25. Arthur Wallis: "Consider The Greatest". Restoration. Nov/Dec. 1981. p.1.

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26. Bradford House Church: Belonging To An Anointed Body. p.26.

implied that apostles are any less needed in God's on-going plan for the church than evangelists, shepherds, and teachers, Arthur Wallis<sup>27</sup> writes:

"The onus clearly rests on those who assert that apostles were only intended to be a temporary institution, to prove it from Scripture."

He wishes to correct the inadequate concept of apostolic ministry which results in the viewing of apostles as the human channels through whom the New Testament was given, but as little else:

"We need to see these men as primarily those who brought the word of revelation and direction into the living situations where God was building his church. It was by comparison a very small though eminent band among them, plus inspired historians like Mark and Luke, who were chosen to give us the sacred writings. Unless we understand this we shall miss completely the significance of such men today and the indispensable role they still have in the building of the church."

In order to understand what God is now saying about apostleship, Wallis says that it is necessary to distinguish three classes of apostle in the New Testament. The first class is occupied solely by Jesus, "the apostle and high priest of our confession" according to Heb.ch.3.v.1. Comprising the second class are the twelve apostles appointed as disciples by Jesus, the last of these being not Paul but Matthias, the replacement for Judas Iscariot. A third distinct category is referred to in Eph.ch.4.v.11 as the "gifts of the ascended Christ" and in considering the matter of apostles today, it is, says Wallis, crucial to see that Paul belonged to this class. Whilst the appointment of 'the Twelve' was pre-Pentecost, that of the Eph.ch.4 apostles was post-Pentecost. Wallis states that the fact that the Ephesian church found it necessary fifty years after Pentecost to be testing apostles to see whether they were genuine, implies that the gift of

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27. Arthur Wallis: "Apostles Today? Why Not?" Restoration. Nov/Dec. 1981. pp.2-5.

apostles was still being conferred on the church. The attainment of "the unity of faith", which according to Eph.ch.4.vv.12-13 is the objective for which the gifts are given, has not yet been realised:

"We have still a long way to go, and apostles, together with the other ministries, are given until that glorious goal is reached. It is illogical to argue that we still need shepherds and teachers but not apostles and prophets." (his italics)

Wallis goes on to distinguish between the historical and the experiential foundations of the Church. Whilst the twelve apostles of the lamb are the historical foundation stones laid once and for all, the ministries of Eph.ch.4 are concerned primarily with an experiential foundation. This latter foundation has to be freshly laid for every redeemed community that comes into being, and it is a foundation of truth. The work of apostles and prophets is distinct from that of the evangelist, and Wallis points out that the Church is not said to be built on the foundation of the evangelist:

"The evangelists' primary concern is the salvation of men and women; the apostles' and prophets' concern is with the related life in the body of those converts. The living stones have to be built together to form God's habitation. The evangelist has to quarry the stone, the apostles and prophets to put individual stones together - the business of finding where each stone belongs and bringing them into a right relationship with each other."

This is tied in with eschatological concerns and the belief that an 'end-time shaking' of the worldwide Church is taking place. This has been heralded by the coming to the fore of apostolic ministry. Wallis concludes:

"It is surely in preparation for the coming storm that God is highlighting this theme at this time. We shall not need the experts to tell us in that day which are the churches which have been built on the foundations of the apostles and prophets. The

day will declare it."

Terry Virgo<sup>28</sup> takes up this theme when he states that if any of the grace-gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers is missing, the church will not reach its intended goal. The apostle is essentially a travelling man, a master builder, able both to break new ground with the Gospel, and to bring an objectivity in his appraisal of a local church's present situation. A typical situation in which the oversight of an apostle is needed is described thus:

"Their traditional meetings were feeling the pressures of new life. Charismatic gifts were emerging, the desire for freer worship was being expressed. How were they to proceed? Many are facing such issues and do not know which way to turn. Fraternalists of like-minded elders will not provide the full answer, nor will charismatic organizations. God's way is to give apostles and prophets. God has simply appointed differently gifted men to do different jobs."

His comments upon democracy in the church are of interest, and show the importance attached to an apostle's 'anointing' by God:

"When there is no anointing, democracy is probably the safest form of church government, but when God begins to give anointed leadership, democracy must make room for God to have his way."

Apostles are to be in mutual submission to each other, and will draw teams around them, delivering themselves in this way from the danger of individualism. The 'release' of apostolic teams will help bring the church to fullness of stature. Virgo urges:

"We are living in days of reformation. Let us not stop short of God's goal for us by failing to draw on all his provision."

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28. Terry Virgo: "The Apostle is No 'Optional Extra' ". Restoration. Nov/Dec. 1981. pp.9-12.

Virgo is one of the Bradford Circle's apostles, and he comments from a personal point of view:

"In recent years I have been greatly blessed in bringing churches together in England in a new way, and also in travelling to India, Nepal and Spain bringing spiritual and material help through our relationship with churches in England."

But what is the extent of an apostle's ministry? David Tomlinson<sup>29</sup> explains that some apostles may operate under other apostles, and that whether this is so or not, apostles should be answerable to each other.

"Men of apostolic stature should not need to check back all the time, but there must be those to whom they are accountable."

All apostles must have a sphere of influence with a clearly defined boundary, and being an apostle in one church does not automatically give one any authority in another. The relationship between apostle and church arose in the early church totally out of pioneer evangelism, and although this may still take place, today's situation is more complex. Existing churches often feel the need of an apostle to build in what is lacking, and in these instances the relationship is based on adoption rather than original fathering. This, of course, is where the problem of 'sheep-stealing' emerges, but Tomlinson does not deal with this. He does, however, accept that there is a danger of some apostolic teams getting so closely linked that they form a new denomination, and indeed many people are of the opinion that this has already come about in the case of some house church groupings such as the Bradford Circle. The problems connected with trans-local authority are numerous. Apart from the likelihood of a new denomination resulting from it, the influence of teachers and leaders from outside an area and their relationship with leaders already within the area is fraught with problems and liable to cause extreme friction. Tomlinson comments:

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29. David Tomlinson: "Q:A: Some burning questions about apostles". Restoration. Nov/Dec. 1981. pp.19-21.

" 'Orbits' of ministry exist around men and groups of men. This is not necessarily wrong or unhelpful. Some orbits may be more closely linked together than others. There is no problem, provided we see that we are all part of a whole and not that whole. More and more we should expect to find these orbits crossing over ... as relationships are formed between individuals and groups from different orbits."

In a consideration of the role of apostolic teams, Bryn Jones recalls that church expansion in New Testament times developed from bases at Jerusalem and Antioch, and he predicts:

"We should expect a similar pattern in our own day. Significant breakthroughs of the gospel will take place in major cities such as London, Paris, Rome, Amsterdam, Oslo, Kampala, Delhi, Chicago, New York and the like, and, in some of these, apostolic team bases will be established. When this occurs, gifted Christians will move to such centres from other areas." <sup>30</sup>

This is all very well, but it ignores the fact that the Church is already established in these areas and has its own indigenous leadership. The inevitable implication must be that new churches will develop alongside existing local churches if necessary, and this has been the pattern in the case of many house churches that are under the direction of apostolic teams.

It is often assumed by critics that modern apostles are regarded as infallible. However, although these men are in positions of marked authority, the Bradford Circle for one does not teach that they are infallible. Nor does the other large house church stream linked by Fullness magazine. Gerald Coates of the Cobham Fellowship approaches the question from the basis that New Testament apostles were not infallible either:

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30. Bryn Jones: "Apostolic Teams Today". Restoration. Nov/Dec. 1981. pp.23-25.



"The infallibility of apostles is a big issue for any Bible believing Christian to have to face in terms of apostolic ministry being present with us today. For a start, the concept that they alone were infallible is very much a myth. Others wrote infallible scriptures who were not apostles such as Luke and Mark for example. Neither can we possibly believe that everything that those early apostles ever said, did and wrote was completely infallible. They were not perfect! The infallibility of apostolic ministry was not contemplated in those days. They submitted to those men because they were worth submitting to." 31

However, some of the smaller and more exclusive fellowships certainly do appear to believe in the infallibility of their apostles. The Bugbrooke community, for instance, seems to accept without question the teaching and direction of their leader, Noel Stanton. An article in Buzz magazine highlighted several disturbing aspects in the life of this community, and noted:

"Noel is the one person in the community whose teachings are apparently accepted without question. He seems to be the hub around whom all the other spokes rotate. 'If you believe he comes from God you believe everything he says', was what an ex-member remembers being told." 32

And it appears that even in house churches which do not specifically teach infallibility, the leaders are held in such awe and reverence that their infallibility is often assumed. This is particularly so in those fellowships which have something of an aversion to doctrinal analysis and tend towards a more simplistic approach. This highlights the problem of using terminology which has such definite connotations in Scripture. In

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31. Gerald Coates: Q & A with G.C.. Private publication. p.8.

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32. Peter Meadows and Lindsay Tuffin: "Bugbrooke's Controversial Community". Buzz. Aug.1980. pp.47-49.

view of this, it is understandable why so many people are strongly opposed to the office of apostle today. The Joint Statement produced by charismatics and Anglican evangelicals took a firm stand on the issue, stating that apostolic authority now belongs only to the Scripture of the Old and New Testament. Whilst latter-day ministers may in certain respects parallel apostolic functions in their primary role as authoritative instructors, the apostles have no successors. Any utterance or gestures of leadership today for which immediate inspiration is claimed must therefore be evaluated by appeal to apostolic standards set forth in the Bible<sup>33</sup>. Others do not repudiate modern apostleship, but would draw a distinction between apostolic office and apostolic function. Such a person is Michael Harper<sup>34</sup>, who states:

"What does seem to emerge from the New Testament is that, while the word 'apostle' is used to describe people who are sent on a mission by someone else, thus conforming to the popular use of the word in contemporary Judaism, the primary use is to describe a very small band of men with a particular (and I would say unique) role." (his italics)

Their ministry, he believes, is both unique and by nature unrepeatable, because, firstly, they were the founders of the Christian Church, and, secondly, some were the men chosen by Christ to be the main contributors to the New Testament. He interprets Eph.ch.2.vv.19-21 - understood somewhat differently by Arthur Wallis - as an indication of this unique role, and indeed he comments in connection with these verses that one obvious thing about a foundation is that it is only laid once. The apostles were in a unique position to transmit to the Church of future generations the teachings of Christ because their witness to Him was direct whereas all other witness is derived. He asserts that the New Testament is more

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33. Joint Statement: Church of England Evangelical Council and the Fountain Trust. Theological Renewal Occasional Paper No.1. April/May 1977. p.10.

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34. op.cit.10. pp.186-198.

concerned about function than appointment to the ministry, and that the apostolic office in the sense of an authoritative ministry in the Church was intended only for the early days of the Church. Only in the secondary sense, as messengers or missionaries, has the apostolic ministry continued, and this is an important aspect of the total ministry of the Church. Whilst he recognises the rightful place of the apostolic function or element in today's church, Harper therefore disagrees with the place of authoritative office. Recounting events in the Catholic Apostolic Church of the nineteenth century when men were appointed to the office of apostle, Harper describes them as "a warning to some modern charismatics who are attempting again to restore the apostolic office". The episcopacy emerged in the second century and replaced the apostolate, and Harper attributes this to:

"... a combination of expediency (which after all is how much ministry in the New Testament developed anyway, owing to the serious exigencies of the time) and the wisdom of the leadership, coupled with the genius of the Holy Spirit." <sup>35</sup>

The distinction between office and function is an important one, and is adhered to by a number of people, whilst others offer a rather broader understanding of contemporary apostles. David Watson writes:

"The word APOSTOLOS simply means 'messenger' or 'emissary'. Therefore the apostles of today are those who travel as representatives or ambassadors of Christ for the purpose of establishing churches or encouraging Christians in their faith. Undoubtedly the church of today is enriched by those who travel widely, bringing new vision and fresh spiritual life, just as in the first century." <sup>36</sup>

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35. op.cit.10. pp.192, 198.

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36. op.cit.2. pp.257-258.

A thought-provoking treatment of the subject is provided by Eric Fife<sup>37</sup> who concluded from his consideration of the New Testament material:

"In the light of all this information the one clear fact emerged that there is no room for dogmatism. Godly and thoughtful men have advanced a variety of views."

His own opinion has changed somewhat in the course of time:

"Many Christians are of the opinion that the apostolic gift has passed away and that there are no apostles today. For many years I subscribed to that view but now I am less convinced. Few men would have the temerity to claim that they are apostles. During my ministry, however, I have met at least some men who seem to be performing the work of an apostle, as far as is possible in the changed circumstances of the twentieth century. They are exercising a wide range of spiritual gifts in their ministry.

"That there are not more apostles today may well be due to the way in which we have ordered church life and mission boards ... It may well be that the gift of apostle-ship would yet flourish if we gave the Lord more freedom to operate."

It is obvious that the term 'apostle' is used with varying degrees of broadness or narrowness by different people. Catholic charismatics frequently use the term 'apostolate' or 'apostolic' in the broadest possible sense, applying them to the work of any Christian engaged upon some specific task. It really seems that people use the term to mean anything they like, and the assumption that it is used to refer strictly to people identical in stature to the Twelve Apostles is an unfounded one. David Tomlinson is sensible and realistic when he comments:

" 'A rose by any other name smells just as sweet.' It is my belief that there have been many apostles, past and present, who

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37. Eric Fife: The Holy Spirit: The Bible and Common Sense. Kingsway. 1980. pp.127,128.

haven't used the label. Terms such as apostle, prophet and teacher are job descriptions, not titles or symbols of status. So going under the right name is not the most important thing in the world.

"... It is the fear that to refer to someone today as 'an apostle' is presumptuous. Divest the name of some of the aura surrounding it, and see an apostle as an ordinary man gifted by God in a particular way and much of our difficulty would melt away." <sup>38</sup>

The other office which is repeatedly stressed alongside the office of the apostle is that of the prophet. These two offices are presented as complimentary to each other, but confusion is often evident over which office is concerned with which function. One group described the prophet's ministry as one in which an accurate knowledge of God's directions is ascertained and passed on to the Church, whereas the apostle continues on from this by being able to apply the prophet's knowledge and set wheels in motion in specific ways in order for the directions to be followed. Others contrast the logic and reason of the apostle with the inspirational and intuitive gift of the prophet, or the wisdom of the apostle with the understanding of the prophet. Some attribute the gift of knowledge to the prophet, and that of wisdom to the apostle, others vice versa. Confusion thus abounds, and this is another area in which one detects a lack of clarity, although it could no doubt be argued that the two ministries are so closely connected that their qualities fuse together.

The same debate arises over the existence of the prophetic office for today as over that of the apostolic office, and the arguments advanced both for and against are very similar. In particular, those against often make a distinction between two classes of New Testament prophet, the revelatory, who were temporary, and the hortatory, who may operate today<sup>39</sup>. Michael

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38. op.cit.29.

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39. See as an example of someone who holds this position, C. Ernest Tatham: Let The Tide Come In!. Creation House. 1976. pp.94-100.

Harper again distinguishes between office and function, stating that the prophetic function today consists of three aspects. The prophet is to speak God's word for the hour in a clear and practical way; foretell the future, so warning the Church of dangers and changes in order that it may steer a safe course; and discern the secrets of men's hearts, delivering discussion and counselling from unreality<sup>40</sup>. He comments:

"... it is most important to recognise that, while prophets ceased in the sense of an authoritative ministry similar to that of the apostles, the prophetic element has always remained in the Church, mushrooming up at its better moments, and only being quenched by institutionalism and scribalism, such as extreme fundamentalism ... The charismatic gift of prophecy has continued in the Church ever since, as has the ministry of the prophet in a secondary sense like that of the apostle ... But we should not today be looking for prophets in the sense in which some were regarded in the New Testament, namely as second only to the apostles and vitally involved in those roles which were unrepeatable, the founding of the Church and the establishment of the New Testament scriptures."<sup>41</sup>

A distinction is apparent here between the gift of prophecy and the ministry of prophecy. Once again distinctions tend to be blurred, but most people state that whilst a prophet will have the gift of prophecy, a person who has this gift will not necessarily be a prophet. David Mansell provides a detailed treatment of the prophet's ministry in his book And Some Prophets<sup>42</sup>, and he forges a strong link between the ministry of the

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40. op.cit.10. pp.53-54.

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41. op.cit.10. p.191.

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42. David Mansell: And Some Prophets. Harvestime Publications. 1977.

prophet and the gift of prophecy. Others, however, depict the prophetic ministry solely in terms of the gift of prophecy<sup>43</sup>. Again, it is the house churches which have brought the prophetic office to the fore, maintaining that this specific office, as opposed to a generalised 'prophetic function', is essential to the progress of the Church today:

"The prophet while seeing the ultimate does not remain a visionary. He is a man on the move. We have long suffered dreamers who proclaim blessing just round the next corner if only we will rededicate ourselves for the 'umpteenth' time. We are weary of hope that is constantly deferred from year to year, generation to generation. Such hope, says the scripture, 'makes the heart sick'. The prophet is not an idealist; he is an initiator, somebody who leads the march."<sup>44</sup>

Many established denominational churches affected by the Charismatic Movement, and even some of those unaffected, now accept that the Church has a 'prophetic role' in the broadest sense, but the emphasis of the house churches is in marked contrast to this by nature of its explicitness.

We turn now from the house churches to a brief consideration of the influence of the Charismatic Movement upon authority and discipline in the established Protestant and Catholic Churches. One marked effect has been what is often described as 'the emancipation of the layman'. Indeed Michael Harper has pinpointed one of the most conspicuous marks of the Holy Spirit's work in charismatic renewal as its insistence on the 'every-member' ministry:

"The charismatic renewal is by no means unique in its stress on this, although it is probably true to say that there is more

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43. See for example David Watson: op.cit.2. p.259; Eric Fife: op.cit.37. pp.131-134.

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44. op.cit.42. p.31.

scope for, and resulting evidence of this New Testament principle in the charismatic renewal than anywhere else in the Church." <sup>45</sup>

David Watson also stresses this aspect. He regrets "the bottle concept of the church", which has a broad base that narrows to the point where the vicar occupies the bottle-neck, and believes that:

"It is no doubt because of this that the fire of the Spirit has resulted in the bottle exploding into numerous house fellowships or house churches where there is room for growth and for the sharing of ministry."

In his opinion, the division between priest and people into the classes of professional and amateur has stifled the growth of the Church and quenched the life of the Holy Spirit. All Christians are in the biblical sense priests and clergy, and realization of this is crucial if the true concept of ministry and leadership in the Church is to be rediscovered. Watson draws a distinction between two kinds of authority, that of official status which draws its strength from the institution or structure concerned, and that of spiritual reality, which should be self-evident and a prerequisite of the first. Today's increasing disenchantment with established institutions along with the desire for genuine reality results in the latter having considerable appeal:

"Ideally there should be no clash between the two. The Church should give official recognition to those in whom the Spirit of God is manifestly at work, while on the other hand such people should be willing to submit into the existing structure, partly as a corrective to the excessive individualism which has weakened so much of the church. It is not enough to claim divine guidance for one's actions; submitting to those who are over us in the Lord is a part of God's method of guidance, as indicated in the Scriptures ... In an unhealthy situation, legal authority may frustrate spiritual authority, and so quench the Holy Spirit; or

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45. op.cit.10. pp.74-75.



spiritual authority may reject legal authority, and this, unless manifestly right, will grieve the Holy Spirit." <sup>46</sup>

Watson's position is endorsed by many of those charismatics who remain within the established denominations, submitting to existent authority whilst at the same time discovering and developing their own abilities in the field of ministry and leadership. The Catholic charismatics in particular have adopted this position, and Heribert Muhlen expresses the characteristic Catholic view when he writes:

"The Catholic view is that the bishops are ultimately responsible for the charismatic renewal ... The catholicity of the charismatic renewal can also be seen not least in the fact that the individual or individual groups are prepared to submit their spiritual experiences to the judgment of the whole Church." <sup>47</sup>

The National Service Committee in Britain has constantly emphasised that it regards itself as purely organizational with no real authority: the real authority is in the bishops of the Church, and there can be no substitute for them within the Charismatic Renewal. It has always been regretted that relatively few bishops have become involved in the Charismatic Renewal, but care has always been taken to keep them fully informed, and priests have also been invited to take an interest in local prayer groups, to offer pastoral assistance, and to be involved at whatever level they wish to operate. Nevertheless, leadership within the Renewal has been exercised largely by lay people who are not used to fulfilling such a role, and many of these have found it an unnerving experience. The dilemma of the Catholic Charismatic Movement was expressed by Ian Petit in 1976:

"The renewal is growing faster than we can provide teachers to teach it correctly. The renewal is for the Church; but if the

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46. For a full discussion of this topic see further: op.cit.2. pp.246-257.

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47. op.cit.3. pp.191-192.

officials of the Church are remaining apart from it, they are making themselves ill-equipped to guide it. This produces a dilemma. We do not want to set up a whole body of teachers, when the Church has its teachers. This is why we are trying to bring into being diocesan teams who can act as a source of information for the diocese and can be used by the diocese for serving the Church." <sup>48</sup>

However, whereas it had seemed earlier that the lay leadership would gladly make way for priestly leadership as soon as possible, when a large number of priests experienced charismatic renewal at a conference at Hopwood Hall at Easter 1978, the lay leadership had by this time become more firmly established. Ian Petit's comments then were as follows:

"Even though this great step forward with the priests is a reason for great rejoicing, I would stress that this doesn't mean that the priests take over the renewal. God has raised up such wonderful lay people who have shown so beautifully the power of the Spirit in them. Vatican II urged us to make use of the whole body of Christ - let us not return to a priest-ridden Church. In the body there are many parts, let us work in harmony and joy together." <sup>49</sup>

The Catholic charismatics had thus reached the same point as the charismatics in the Protestant denominations, recognizing the legitimacy of lay leadership alongside institutionally established leadership. One might expect that in a Church which has laid such emphasis upon its priestly hierarchy, a clash between the clerical and the lay leadership would be inevitable. But so far there is no sign of this, probably because the charismatics have repeatedly stressed their submission to papal and episcopal authority, thereby helping to allay fears of 'rebellion in the

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48. Ian Petit: Goodnews No.5. Aug/Sept. 1976.

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49. Ian Petit: Goodnews No.16. June/July 1978.

ranks'. The attitude of the papacy towards the Charismatic Renewal can best be described as diplomatic. Rene Laurentin has claimed that the Holy See has been favourably inclined towards the Renewal, "even if in a discreet way"<sup>50</sup>. This, however, is largely a matter of personal interpretation, for the statements that have been made are cautious and generalized, not necessarily negative but by no means overtly positive. Edward O'Connor noted three major dates in the pontificate of Pope Paul VI: February 21st 1973, when Cardinal Suenens spoke with the Pope about Charismatic Renewal; October 10th 1973, when the Pope met with some leaders of the Renewal; and May 18th 1975, when the Pope addressed the International Conference on the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church<sup>51</sup>. Although these meetings were viewed by many charismatics as a sign of his approval, it is by no means clear that this was so, and some charismatics have realised this. With regard to the second occasion, the Newsletter remarked that although the leaders received encouragement and gratitude from the Pope, a specific papal word of approval still lay somewhere in the future<sup>52</sup>. And Kilian McDonnell commented with regard to the Pope's words:

"Note should be taken of their nonspecific character and therefore their weight and importance as papal approval of the renewal at this date should not be stressed. One could easily duplicate similar papal exhortations to all kinds of groups."<sup>53</sup>

In 1978, however, the Pope sent a letter to Bishop Fox in which he states

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50. Rene Laurentin: Catholic Pentecostalism. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1977. p.16.

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51. Edward O'Connor: Pope Paul and the Spirit. Ava Maria Press. 1978. p.40.

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52. Newsletter. Nov/Dec. 1973.

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53. Kilian McDonnell: Charismatic Renewal and the Churches. Seabury Press. 1976. p.65.

that he invokes upon the Easter conference for priests:

"... an abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit, also the Spirit's gifts and graces, and prays that this ecclesial event will confirm the participants in their lofty and indispensable priestly calling and their union with their Bishops ..."<sup>54</sup>

This seems more positive, but the stress upon the position of the Bishops should also be noted. Pope John Paul II has been less guarded in his comments. He is quoted as saying:

"I am convinced that this movement is a sign of His (the Lord's) action."<sup>55</sup>

Then in 1979 the International Communication Office in Brussels issued a press release which described in detail a meeting of International Council members with the Pope in the Vatican. The Pope's response to a description of the Charismatic Renewal was apparently very favourable, and those present assured him of their allegiance. Repeated expressions of allegiance and submission to papal and episcopal authority seem to have considerably allayed Vatican fears about the Charismatic Movement, and at present it continues to submit itself freely and fully to ecclesiastical authority.

Finally, we may note several matters which various people have believed to constitute dangers in the context of authority and discipline. Firstly, abuse of authority is frequently feared with respect to the Christian lay communities which have been spawned by the Charismatic Movement. Whilst the majority function in a balanced and healthy manner, abuses have undoubtedly occurred though perhaps not receiving as much publicity as the expose by the National Catholic Reporter of the United

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54. Goodnews No.16. June/July 1978.

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55. "Is the Pope Charismatic?" Goodnews No.27. April/May 1980.

States of abuses of authority at a covenant community in Notre Dame. Secondly, some people have felt that an unhealthy aspect of the Charismatic Movement is the number of women involved in active leadership. Others, however, feel that this is a healthy development, and a necessary corrective to what has been an inadequate role for women in many parts of the Church<sup>56</sup>. A third point which has been a cause of concern to some is that the primary authority of Scripture is usurped by the apparent authority of certain leaders, or else that the emphasis upon experience relegates the Bible to a secondary status with respect to authority. This is inevitably an ever-present danger in a movement which has continually stressed direct experience of God, and communication with Him. The danger of the creation of personality cults has also been noted, and Eric Fife has expressed this as follows:

"If testimonies are over-emphasised it is almost inevitable that people with an interesting experience are much in demand. Their aim is usually to help others and bring glory to God, but at times it becomes almost a cult of personality. One example of this is Dennis Bennett. His experience as an Episcopalian minister who received the gift of tongues in 1960 is certainly interesting. However, it is pathetic that years later he was still travelling the world telling of this experience."<sup>57</sup>

And Rene Laurentin perceptively asks whether we are not in fact witnessing a "revitalized cult of obedience", which goes too far by pressing an obedience for obedience's sake as an act of homage to the transcendent God<sup>58</sup>. Some house church teaching comes so close to this mark as to make

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56. For a treatment of this subject, see David Watson: op.cit.2. pp.276-283.

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57. op.cit.37. p.184.

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58. op.cit.50. p.168.

such a comment a very pertinent one.

Whilst the movement is indeed threatened by authoritarianism in the possible establishment of unchallenged, infallible leaders in individual groups, it may paradoxically also be threatened by the danger of individualism in the form of believers who submit only to the guidance of the Holy Spirit gleaned from their own subjective experiences. And it is such a danger that the more rigid authority systems seek to avoid. The need for balance between freedom and obedience is paramount, but Church History demonstrates that in the past this balance has been sadly lacking. The different sections of the Charismatic Movement hope to achieve it, and time alone will tell which, if any, has done so.

Chapter 12.

LITURGY AND WORSHIP

The influence of the Charismatic Movement in this field has been one of its most noticeable. The new forms of worship which it has developed have permeated the Church and have appeared even in those congregations which have had little direct involvement in the movement. As one Catholic leader has remarked:

"The people who hate the Charismatic Renewal are singing our songs!"

Few Christians can be unaware of the many songs<sup>1</sup> which have issued forth from charismatic circles and achieved widespread popularity: "Seek ye first", "Oh what a gift", "I am the Resurrection" and others were initially the hallmark of the Charismatic Movement, but are now widely used outside overtly charismatic circles. Indeed many people fail to realize just how much their church's worship has been affected by the movement. The application of the term "chorus" to these songs has been an unfortunate one, conveying as it does the notion of triteness, repetition, and a jolly 'sing-along' atmosphere in which reverence for the divine finds little place. Many of these songs have in fact consisted wholly of words of Scripture set to music which has accentuated and highlighted the depth of their meaning. Whilst some songs have regrettably been rather banal, and consequently offensive to many Christians, they are in the minority, and the Church has inherited a versatile and meaningful repertoire from the Charismatic Movement.

Ease of communication has been a significant aspect of charismatic worship. Individuals feel free to express themselves through use of the body - raised hands, clapping, and dancing in worship, the 'holy kiss' as opposed to the comparatively formal handshake. There is the freedom to

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1. For a selection of these songs, see: Sound of Living Waters. Hodder and Stoughton. 1974; Fresh Sounds. Hodder and Stoughton. 1976.

contribute to worship as the Holy Spirit leads an individual or group, and this may take the form of a song, a prophecy, a reading from Scripture, or simply a "testimony" to the work of God in their life. It should be noted that informality is not necessarily accompanied by an absence of structure. The relaxed atmosphere which is characteristic of such occasions, and the use of contemporary music forms and contemporary expression mean that the outsider frequently feels less awkward there than he might feel in more traditional church worship. In addition to this, the genuine joy and reality of the worship is often in itself an effective evangelistic means. Frederick Dale Bruner, who is very critical of Pentecostal movements in general, quotes the conclusion of Walter Hollenweger that their strength:

"... does not lie in theology nor in doctrine but in the attempt to create congregations which are open to spontaneous contributions and who take seriously in worship the non-literary 'oral' man, that is, the majority of our population. This is a serious challenge to the traditional churches." <sup>2</sup>

This conclusion is applicable to the Charismatic Movement. The movement has also done much to restore worship to a central place in the Church, and has done so in what many find to be a refreshing way. Michael Harper writes:

"If you glance through Sounds of Living Waters and Fresh Sounds you will see a great variety of songs which are the expression in verse and song of spiritual renewal in people's hearts. Almost all are God-centred, and corporate rather than individual expressions of worship. The words are simple. There is a marked absence of Victorian sentimentality. Sankey finds no place in these modern songbooks. The music is melodious. They are eminently singable. Anyone who has been to the average charismatic prayer meeting will find it easy to make comparisons with anything else. Whether one would say it is better, is a matter of opinion, but that it is different is beyond

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2. Frederick Dale Bruner: A Theology of the Holy Spirit. Eerdmans. 1970.



contradiction." 3

He emphasises that charismatic renewal brings to the Christian a new enjoyment of God and that this factor naturally finds expression in worship. The revitalizing of worship is one of the most significant changes in the life of one who has been baptised in the Spirit:

"Worship which was tedious in public and almost non-existent in private becomes a blessed experience of joyful fellowship with the Father who loves us and the Son who abides in us. The Holy Spirit purifies our worship so that we can lose all consciousness of time and space and our wretched self-interests, and become 'lost in wonder, love and praise'. The expression 'praise the Lord', which occupies such a prominent place in the Bible, finds its way often to our lips as we feel the love of God welling up from a full heart." 4

Whilst in some 'charismatically renewed' churches, the charismatic style of worship has taken over completely, in others it has become comfortably integrated with more traditional forms. Some churches follow a traditional form of worship on Sundays and then have a meeting during the week which is 'charismatic' in form. The format of these meetings is very flexible, but they generally contain a time of worship, the reading or exposition of Scripture, a time of "sharing", and a time of prayer. The worship consists of collective praise, using many of the Renewal songs accompanied by the guitar, tambourine, or other instruments, whilst the reading or exposition of Scripture may be given by a leader, a visiting speaker, or, very often, by means of a tape of a well-known speaker. The prayer time again involves praise and worship and may be punctuated by the singing of choruses or singing in the Spirit. Prophecy, speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues are frequent occurrences.

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3. Michael Harper: This Is The Day. Hodder and Stoughton. 1979. pp.66-67.

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4. Michael Harper: Power For The Body of Christ. Fountain Trust. 1964. p.43.

Intercessory prayer is an important part of the meeting, and this may include prayers for baptism in the Spirit or healing, and also for the particular needs of individuals present. It often follows on naturally from the time of sharing in which people give "testimony" to what God has taught them or ways in which they have recently known His blessing and guidance. It is sometimes suggested that such meetings are basically a protest against traditional worship, but it is unfair to imply that the motivation behind them is essentially a negative one. The majority of charismatics are positive in their approach, motivated by a desire to worship God in an informal atmosphere and to enjoy close fellowship with like-minded people. Alongside this, there is also a very keen desire to be biblical, and the New Testament is eagerly perused in order to glean more about the worship of the early church. Liturgy too must be submitted to the New Testament, and subjected to its judgment and correction. Indeed, Colin Buchanan is reported as singling out the relationship between the Spirit and the Church's worship as the area which is in greatest need of "more serious theologising"<sup>5</sup>. But there is also the danger noted by Tom Smail of a legitimate concern for freedom of worship resulting in what he describes as:

"... an electronic elite, initiating their devotees into all sorts of distracting obsessions with dance and self-expression that have little relevance to the gospel centre which it is all supposed to serve."<sup>6</sup>

Smail terms this "a gnosticism of praise", and lists it amongst several other possible gnostic tendencies in charismatic circles.

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5. report ("Serious theologising needed"). Renewal No.82. Aug/Sept. 1979. p.7.

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6. T.A. Smail: "In Tune With The Trinity, part 2". Theological Renewal No.5. Feb/Mar. 1977. p.6.

A Renewal Study Section<sup>7</sup> considers the biblical basis for worship and the relationship between worship and the Spirit. It states that where the Spirit of God is working powerfully, a new reality, depth and quality will be found in the worship of His people:

"They are delivered from repetitious recitals of liturgical traditions of all kinds (whether written or not) into liberty of praise, effectiveness of intercession and an eventful encounter with a living God who speaks his word and does his work among them."

Jn.ch.4.vv.22-23 expresses the close connection between Spirit and worship and indicates the two leading characteristics of Christian worship. Firstly, it is 'in the spirit' and consequently partakes of divine reality, creativity and effectiveness, constituting fresh, first-hand and eventful dealings with a God present and working amongst the believers. Secondly, it is 'in truth' and is thus never free religiosity or the pursuit of unlimited spiritual experience, but is always bound to the revealed acts of God in Scripture, to the truth declared in Christ. It is noted that both these characteristics appeared at Pentecost as a result of the outpouring of the Spirit. Worship in the Charismatic Renewal is therefore to be characterised by spontaneity and liberty which show that the Spirit is always doing a new thing, and faithfulness to given truth as expressed in Christ and through Scripture, sacrament and liturgy. To lose either of these is to cease to worship in the Spirit of Christ, and charismatics are warned to beware of a new ritual conformity to certain kinds of music, lifting up of hands, hugging, and so on, on the grounds that these could become a new bondage and rob charismatics of their liberty. Mt.ch.10.v.8 summarises the two-fold movement of Christian worship in both giving and receiving. Prayer is at the centre of worship, and prayer of all kinds is the concern and gift of the Spirit. As well as specific acts of prayer, mention is made of the constant attitude of prayer which is an essential part of the equipment for spiritual warfare. Christian prayer may be both

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7. T.A. Smail: Renewal Study Section ("Worship and the Spirit").  
Renewal No.60. Dec/Jan. 1976.

individual and corporate and it is never just inward and 'spiritual' but expresses itself in specific acts of vocal and audible worship. Praise, however, has priority, the pre-eminent act of Christian worship being thankfulness and praise for God's saving acts in Christ. Acts ch.2 and Eph.ch.5.vv.18-19 are quoted to show that the immediate result of a filling with the Spirit is neither ethical conduct (although that followed) nor the appearance of a specific spiritual gift, but rather a release of praise. With reference to the latter text, attention is drawn to the fact that inner joy gets outward, corporate expression, and that in praise there is a liturgical element - 'psalms' - and a creative element - 'songs which the Spirit gives'. Hence:

"The Spirit both reactivates tradition and adds to it, and makes both old and new fresh and real."

This is illustrated by the Charismatic Renewal which is characterised by a release of praise through the psalms of Scripture, the hymns of the Church, and new contemporary songs given by the Spirit, all of which come together as an expression of the new, Spirit-inspired love, joy and peace. All other prayer, especially that of intercession, needs to arise out of this prayer of praise if it is to be God-centred rather than problem-centred. When one is praising God, one is most effective in intercession, and this is because one is most in touch with God. Intercession is presented as an integral activity in the life of God, there being a double divine intercession in Christ's intercession for Christians (Rom.ch.8.v.34, etc.) and the Spirit's intercession for Christians (Rom.ch.8.vv.26-27). The Spirit, moreover, maintains the Christian in constant intercession and right intercession:

"He undergirds our prayer life in all its intermittance and confusion ... There is all the difference in the world between the heavy, dull intercession that comes to God with long and general lists of requests, and the Spirit-inspired intercession which knows that it is here and now dealing directly and specifically with God and praying in the Spirit with Christ to the Father."

The Spirit's coming is in fact the answer to worshipful intercession, as Acts ch.4.v.31 and several other texts (Lk.ch.11.v.13; Rom.ch.8.vv.15-17; Mt.ch.7.v.11) show.

In the New Testament worship is presented as primarily a corporate activity and the Spirit distributes the necessary gifts throughout the body of Christ (1 Cor.ch.12.v.7 etc). Through the creativity of the Spirit, everyone makes their distinctive contribution (1 Cor.ch.14.v.26), and the service is to be ordered in such a way that all these gifts are to be allowed to function in freedom, but at the same time with order. All this implies a disciplined leadership of worship within the body, but it is pointed out that the function of such a leader is to elicit and order all the other ministries and not to exercise them all himself:

"Such a conception of many ministries within one body is revolutionary for all our traditions and only the Spirit can give it reality."

Rom.ch.12.v.1 and Col.ch.3.v.17 are cited to show that what a Christian is before God in worship can never be confined to liturgical occasions, but inevitably spills over into the rest of their life and activities.

The extensive treatment of the topic outlined above is an accurate representation of the understanding of worship in the Charismatic Movement. Attitudes to worship and liturgy are essentially positive, and this whole area is eagerly explored. Colin Buchanan writes in Theological Renewal that the term 'liturgy' is alive with promise. In its most positive form, he says, it means the Church's worship, and in particular its sacramental worship<sup>8</sup>. However, he suggests that 'liturgy' is maybe understood in too narrow a sense. In the New Testament the term used for the meeting of the Church is 'to come together', and on that basis, Buchanan suggests that probably the best understanding of the word 'liturgy' today is simply 'the church's agenda for when it meets'. He makes the point that if the

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8. Colin Buchanan: "The Holy Spirit and Liturgy". Theological Renewal No.2. Feb/March 1978. pp.6-13.

boundaries of liturgy are not placed between 'printed set texts' and other ways of worship, then two parties traditionally polarized over this issue are in fact much nearer to each other than they have thought. In the last analysis, however, the most important question must be that of how God wants Christians to order their worship. Buchanan feels that if Christians are not wholly agreed on the agenda for when they meet, there are still enough growing points for a loving and sensitive convergence to be set in hand. He suggests that it is a mark of Christian maturity for people to join willingly and as fully as possible in the worship of local churches, even when they would not have chosen or imposed the patterns of worship they find there. It is when individuals participate primarily because they are Christians and thus belong there, and not because of personal preferences or ideals, that they earn the right to bring their own fragmentary understandings of God's ways into the 'liturgy', and in making this contribution help to correct or improve the pattern of local worship. Many charismatics have followed this latter course and have earned the respect of non-charismatics for doing so.

From the earliest days of the Charismatic Movement, it has been recognised that worship is centred around an attitude of the heart. Patricia Beall has delineated five interrelated attitudes of heart which influence corporate worship : anticipation that God will reveal Himself and speak; expectation of His presence and activity; orientation towards God and other members of His family; participation in openness in worship with others; and the integration of worship into the whole of one's life<sup>9</sup>. It is clear from this how worship is regarded as being all-encompassing in relation to every aspect of the Christian's life. But why has this been such a fresh discovery for participants in the Charismatic Movement? Whilst this has a lot to do with the fact that charismatic renewal has revitalized every sphere of their relationship with God, it is also true that worship within the Church in general has been deficient in depth and vitality. David Watson has stated that as the emphasis on formal

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9. Patricia Beall: Renewal Study Section ("The Holy Spirit and Worship: Attitudes of the Heart.") Part 1 in Renewal No.88. Aug/Sept. 1980. Part 2 in Renewal No.89. Oct/Nov. 1980.

liturgical worship grew in church history, so the presence and power of the Spirit steadily decreased<sup>10</sup>. He considers the nature of worship in some detail<sup>11</sup>, emphasising at the outset that the primary task of the church is to worship God and that to neglect this foremost calling is to invite spiritual aridity and to dishonour God. True worship must be firmly based on the nature and revelation of God and on His creative and redemptive acts, and whilst worship and enjoyment of God are inextricably mixed, the former is neither at the dictate of feelings nor confined to spontaneous expressions of joy. It involves the sacrifice of one's body, of one's possessions, and of one's praise. Watson draws attention to the three main words used by the Jews for 'praise'. Halal was to do with 'making a noise', zamar describes the singing or playing of music, and yada referred to the bodily actions and gestures that often accompany praise. He recommends that there usually be good theological content in songs of praise, so that they be more than a mere sound to stimulate the emotions. However, Watson also recognises the value of the slow and thoughtful repetition of statements such as 'Jesus is Lord', which amounts in effect to a sung meditation:

"It is not always necessary to write a solid 'body of divinity' into every spiritual song."

He recognises and appreciates many great traditional hymns, but also states:

"... when the theological understanding of most congregations is frighteningly small, I wonder what helpful thoughts pass through the minds of most people when they sing 'Consubstantial, co-eternal, While unending ages run'? And is it true that the love of sinners 'can ne'er forget the wormwood and the gall'? Examples like this abound in most hymn-books and although many

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10. David C.K. Watson: I Believe In The Church. Hodder and Stoughton. 1979. p.25.

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11. op.cit.10. pp.179-224.

good and meaningful hymns do exist, it would be wrong to despise the simpler expressions of worship."

Above all, worship should be a delight, not just a duty, and three features that particularly need to be remembered are singled out. Firstly, true worship is not a performance but must always be directed towards the living God. Secondly, it should always edify the body of Christ and is never meant to be dominated by one specialist who does all the work on behalf of everybody else. And thirdly, it is always dependent on the presence of the Holy Spirit:

"The church that is seeking for renewal in its worship must first seek for renewal in its experience of the Holy Spirit. Liturgical revision may be a helpful aid to worship, but it can never be a substitute for a fresh effusion of the Spirit's power."

These three points are frequently emphasised by charismatics when asked to describe their approach to worship, and a further factor which they stress is the role which music plays in worship. John Marsh writes that music played a significant part in the expression of praise in the Old Testament and that this carried over into New Testament times (Eph.ch.5.v.19; Col.ch.3.v.16)<sup>12</sup>. Although there are few details of the early church's worship, they continued to use the psalms and musical instruments, and sang hymns and spiritual songs, the latter of which may have been original, spontaneous expressions of praise to God in music. This, states Marsh, is in striking contrast to the contemporary Christian scene:

"From cathedral church to country chapel, and across the denominations, our music, in fact all our worship, is often uninspiring, unimaginative, and unworthy of the Lord we worship - very different from the worship of God's people in biblical times."

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12. John Marsh: "The place of music in worship". Renewal No.76. Aug/Sept. 1978. pp.27-32.



Marsh suggests three important factors that contribute to the difference. The first of these is the exuberant joy and enthusiasm which marked the worship of biblical times - a marked contrast to the noticeable lack of joy in much of contemporary worship. Joy in worship will only come about when the individual knows an enjoyment and sense of thrill in their relationship with God through Christ. The second factor is that both Old and New Testament show a variety in worship, both in style (for example, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs) and in expression (in voices, instruments, and dance). Today has seen very little variety in worship, and here we find a plea for the use of a wider assortment of musical instruments and for the singing of simple songs to guitar accompaniment. Spontaneity is the third element which was prevalent in biblical worship and is conspicuous by its absence today. Spontaneity and order are not mutually exclusive and Marsh asks whether a member of the congregation would be given the freedom to contribute a poem or a song in the service as an expression of some fresh experience or new understanding. Similarly, would they be encouraged or censured if they began to clap in time to a hymn or to raise their hands in a symbolic gesture of worship? Speaking of music in particular, Marsh states that like anything else, it must be prayerfully chosen, thoroughly prepared, and presented in a manner which is wholly worthy of the one whom is worshipped. 'Nothing but the best for God' should be the aim in all Christian activity and not least in worship.

Applying some of these principles to practical and specific situations and problems, Marsh advises a sensitive handling of prejudices and misunderstandings, and the need to look for spiritual as well as musical qualifications in those who lead worship, such as the choir and organist. Indeed, if music is to have its proper place as an important and integral part of worship, the spiritual qualification is more important than the musical one. The way in which music is prepared is often neglected, and this is an important factor. If it is done in an insufficiently spiritual context, there is an imbalance there: prayer, Bible study and sharing between the group is of inestimable value, and enhances the quality of performance. Such an attitude is only possible if each member of the group is committed to God, His people, and this particular God-given ministry. Finally, however worship of God is expressed, it should be glorifying to Him and not egotistical. If there is a thoroughly spiritual approach to

worship, then there is an awareness of God, and worship becomes a powerful evangelistic tool (2 Chron.ch.5.vv.13-14). Worship, states Marsh, must therefore be a top priority for Christians, and all Christian activity, whether in mission, social concern, or theological study, will have much greater and longer lasting effect when it arises out of - and is an expression of - vital, meaningful worship.

Many churches and fellowships have built up a specific 'music ministry', which operates with a definite degree of professionalism and is organised and guided by an appointed leader. As an example of the approach and outlook of such a group we may look in detail at a particular group which is attached to a fellowship in the south of England<sup>13</sup>. This "band" leads worship and provides the music for church events, which may include anything from evangelistic meetings to pantomines. The group started with an acoustic guitar, but the line-up has changed over the years and now includes between two and three thousand pounds' worth of equipment. The leader of the group explained their aims and their outlook on the contemporary music scene, both within and outside the churches. He summarised their position in the words of the title of American Christian rock musician, Larry Norman's song "Why Should the Devil have all the Good Music?", explaining that whereas two hundred years ago the Church led the way in music, and therefore had a leading say in culture and the arts, over the past fifty years the Church has abandoned this area, and 'the World' now dominates instead. Music, like art and drama, is recognised as a medium which is basically good and is a God-given means for Man to express his creativity, and so there is every reason for Christians to be fully involved in it. This reflects the characteristic attitude of the Charismatic Movement and is representative too of developing attitudes in many sectors of Evangelicalism. The aim of this particular group is to see Christians getting back to leading the world in music rather than creating an alternative music which is separate from that of 'the World'. Their concept of music is thus one which encompasses a wider area than that of worship. Music in worship, however, is viewed in a different light to the

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13. Interview with the leader of a music group based in a fellowship in southern England. July 1980.

use of music in concerts, because music in worship is necessarily flexible. It is felt that although the theory has been there in a general sense, the new emphasis upon living in the Spirit in life has taken time to pervade worship. The important thing in worship is for people to respond to God, and they must therefore be free to express themselves as they wish. The band hopes to encourage people to find their free and natural expression of worship by providing a relaxed musical backing and encouragement, and leading the way through hymns and choruses. Singing in tongues (singing in the Spirit) often occurs, and this frequently involves using the tune of a known song as a structure from which to be more creative. This tends to happen more than free singing in tongues, but there have been developments in this area as follows. About ten years ago, all singing in the Spirit was based on one modal chord and usually hovered around this chord. However, five or six years ago, singing in tongues became increasingly more creative as people became adventurous in this medium and were able to add rhythm and variety. This perhaps reflects decreasing self-consciousness and the lessening of inhibitions as people became more used to personal expression in worship. It is felt that there is never a set pattern for how worship should be led, although there is obviously a limit to the number of permutations that can be made.

Direction and leadership is believed to be important in music, and the ideal is to lead so well that this element is unobtrusive. Those involved in the group have been together for a year and take their involvement seriously, practising weekly and aiming to produce first-class music. Careful preparation precedes a meeting of worship, and the leader normally prepares a series of songs with the aim of fitting them together in such a way that people will be encouraged to "get on and worship and bless the Lord". The leader tries to introduce the right song at the appropriate point. For his personal use in the choice of songs, he has divided them into various categories, such as "thoughtful", "repentant", and so on. He states that a lot of songs are similar in construction, but stresses the importance of choosing a song through which people will find expression for their feelings towards God at that particular time. Sometimes secular music is played as people come into the meetings, with the purpose of creating a relaxed atmosphere and an informal setting. Such music may include Beatles numbers, and top twenty hits. This practice illustrates

how the distinction between sacred and secular has been broken down. The art form itself is essentially good, and creativity which is not specifically Christian is equally appreciated, and utilised as something which is honouring to God, who created the basic form in the first place. Whilst the majority of charismatics now share this point of view, by no means all of them would necessarily follow this practice. Within the church served by the group, not everybody appreciates contemporary music to the same degree, and some of them would undoubtedly prefer a more traditional type of worship. The leader of the band felt that for himself traditional liturgy and worship are too restrictive, but he acknowledged that for a lot of people they really are relevant. He found the 'Kiss of Peace' and the 'Greeting' of Anglicanism "great", but "would not enjoy it every week":

"We like the freedom of being able to do anything we like. God meets a lot of people in traditional liturgy. God honours us when we're being true to what we know. The important thing is people responding to God in worship and love."

The group has actually recorded two L.P.s of worship songs, and has more recently been involved in a musical production. At the time of the recordings there was tension between those with a contemporary outlook on music and those of a more classical orientation. Both groups have, however, come to a point of toleration and understanding of each other, although the contemporary music advocates inevitably find the music more to their taste. The group tries to encourage different kinds of cultural forms in music and wants to see all sorts of alternatives coming up to what they are currently doing. Contemporary music thus provides a natural focus. Most people in the church have found rock and roll music and 'punk' distasteful and consider them incompatible with worship. The leader of the group liked them as music forms, but believes it will be a long time before they come into worship because the style of worship is always conditioned by those taking part. At the moment he cannot envisage 'punk' being used in worship. Summarising their attitude to the use of music, he said:

"Basically, anything goes within our standards of whatever is good, whatever is pure."

This is a fairly progressive attitude within the Charismatic Movement, and many people would no doubt wish to go into careful analytical detail here concerning the motivation and philosophy behind contemporary secular music. Finally, the need to be contemporary and relevant to the generation that Christianity is trying to reach was noted as an important reason for using contemporary music in worship, and this is a point that is taken very seriously within the movement.

A major innovation in the sphere of worship has been that of dance and drama<sup>14</sup>, the yada factor mentioned above by David Watson.

"The value of dance and movement is being re-discovered by many churches today, after a nervous start some years ago."<sup>15</sup>

This means of expression in worship was pioneered by the Fisherfolk, who held workshops at many of the charismatic conferences and thereby gradually introduced the medium into the churches. They have since produced records and worship kits consisting of music and sketches, and these have been used throughout Britain as people have overcome their reservations and started to explore this new area. Whilst stating that some people enjoy dance and drama in worship and find it helpful, Anne Long also notes that others are concerned lest the door is being opened to compromise with secular forms of entertainment. But she does not feel that it is a question of jumping on the latest bandwagon, and stresses that if it is rightly used, Christians can utilize dance and drama both to share and to rejoice in the gospel. She points out that Christian truth can be watched as well as heard, and whilst drama is in no way intended to replace preaching, it can complement it by illustrating a theme, preparing a way for a verbal statement, or

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14. Two important books that deal with this topic are Anne Long: Praise Him in the Dance. Hodder and Stoughton. 1977; and Patricia Beall and Martha Keys Barker: The Folk Arts In Renewal. Hodder and Stoughton. 1980..

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15. Anne Long: "Drama and dance in the church". Renewal No.71. Oct/Nov. 1977. pp.29-31.

demonstrating some part of the Bible's teaching. The visual element is so much to the fore nowadays that she feels it is worthy of serious consideration by Christians. When Christian truth is dramatized well, people become involved and remember, and much care is therefore necessary concerning the interpretation and communication of material. She goes on to emphasise that Christians have every aspect of their humanity, including their bodies, with which to serve and glorify God, and this provides a further illustration of the Charismatic Movement's characteristically positive attitude to humanity and the arts. There has been a tendency in the Church to negative thought about the body, states Anne Long, some people fearing that dancing in church encourages worshippers to focus attention on bodies rather than on God. However, the Hebrew doctrine of man stresses a unity of the physical and spiritual, and exponents of dance maintain that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with bodily movement if it is used with integrity. Any wrongness is not in the art form but in the observer or the dancer using thoughts or imagination for selfish gratification and indulgence, as opposed to outgoing worship and love of God. Caution should consequently be exercised in several areas by Christians experimenting in dance and drama. The end must be kept firmly in view and Christian creativity will seek content, form and style of communication which really are conducive to God's truth. It is no answer to simply put a Christian message into a secular mould, and discipline, dedication and hard work are essential. Moreover, there must be within the group that is working together in this sphere a mutual commitment, care and discipline which affects all its output. Anne Long goes on to provide an example of what took place in a 'workshop' which she led and which covered music, dance, drama, writing and art. By way of preparation, members of the workshop studied the Passion narratives and other Bible passages, which were then dramatized. A time of footwashing was followed by discussions of how people had felt in the giving and receiving roles, and by prayer for opportunities to be 'foot-washers' amongst families, neighbours, and the church fellowship. Three large wooden crosses were used as aids in focusing on a quiet evening of meditation and prayer through movement, worship dances were used on other occasions, and creativity was expressed in painting, craft work, new music, poems and prose. Many testified to what they had learned or understood afresh about the Passion, and for some the workshops had had considerable therapeutic value in emotional and

psychological areas. Whilst Anne Long is openly enthusiastic about the possibilities of such creative expression, she does however realise that emerging dance and drama groups in particular often need ongoing teaching and help in what they are attempting.

Although many people are still extremely hesitant about the role of dance and drama in worship, it has nevertheless become increasingly acceptable. It is felt by many to be a meaningful and fulfilling way of expressing oneself to God, not least because it involves the use of the physical body in expressiveness. Dance may be spontaneous in that the Holy Spirit guides the movements which make up the dance, or alternatively in the sense that individuals may simply jig around the room in expression of their joy before God. Sometimes a specific series of movements will be practised and performed in front of others in order to stimulate and encourage them in worship. Dance may therefore be spontaneous or rehearsed, directed in detail by the Holy Spirit, or simply a person's expression of joy. The value of dance in the private worship of an individual Christian is portrayed by Greta Travers in the Anglicans for Renewal newsletter, when she writes:

"I have always enjoyed dancing, but felt too clumsy and shy to try it in public! However, I began to try out dance forms as part of my own times of prayer and praise and immediately felt more tuned-in to the reality of life and the energy in the atmosphere all around us. Benefits such as better breathing and posture and a happier, more positive outlook came quickly. I was given far more than I gave, as is always the case when one sets out to worship God with one's whole being. I soon lost my initial shyness and fears and wanted to join with others to take part in a group act of worship.<sup>16</sup>

Many charismatics recognise the value of dance for the individuals who dance and the church as a whole, even if they do not take part themselves.

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16. Greta Travers: "Praise the Lord in the Dance". Anglicans for Renewal. No.6. Pentecost. 1981.

Others cannot see anything at all in it, but are happy to tolerate it if it is helpful to some. For some, however, there has been considerable trauma before they have been able to accept dance and drama as legitimate expressions of worship. It is interesting that numbering themselves amongst such people are John Noble and Gerald Coates of the Fullness Circle, which has used these forms extensively. Having been won through to an acceptance of dance and drama, however, they point out that the Old Testament prophets used dramatic symbolism in the proclamation of their message, as did the New Testament prophet Agabus in Acts ch.21.vv.10-11. But they wish to draw attention to the important distinction between the area of make-believe in drama and the unreality which God desires to strip believers of:

"Drama involves a creative use of the imagination that God has given us with a view to communicating some aspect of truth, always involving a tacit acceptance between performers and audience ... of the aspect of illusion. Unreality, on the other hand, is bound up with the unhealthy spirit of deception and self-deception where some part of the truth is obscured - delusion rather than illusion." <sup>17</sup>

They further warn that drama in the church should not be:

" ... simply the product of individuals looking for personal fulfillment, artistic drop-outs who have not made it on the stage of the world, creating a platform for themselves among God's people. We need men and women caught up with the prophetic spirit of the age enacting in life, both privately and publicly, the purposes of God."

It has already been noted that David Watson has pointed out that dance was a natural expression of worship in the Old and New Testaments <sup>18</sup>. Having experienced the place of dance within regular Christian worship for

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17. John Noble and Gerald Coates: "Q & A". Fullness. Vol.21. p.17.

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18. op.cit.10. pp.195-196, 324-325, 328.



several years, he has personally become convinced that this biblical expression of praise is both meaningful and important for the present generation. He too emphasises that artistic ability is created by God and is essentially good when redeemed for the glory of Christ:

"For the church to be afraid of art, or even worse to oppose art, is a tragic sign of a church that misunderstands its Creator, denies the humanity of its members, and has become irrelevant to the world which it has been called to redeem."

As well as constituting a valid and beautiful expression of worship, dance and drama are also relevant and powerful forms of communication. But have exponents of dance and drama recognised and thought through the issues involved with sufficient clarity? Watson seems to suggest that this may not be so:

"Once we see something of the value of art in Christian worship and mission, there are still many questions to be thought through. What is good and what is bad? What is moral and what is immoral? How far must the artist's integrity and freedom of expression be preserved at all costs? Is it ever right to think of art as a useful tool for evangelism? Can we make any valid distinction between the 'spiritual' and the 'secular'? What is wholesome and fitting within church buildings? What is acceptable as a form of valid communication on the streets (such as fast-moving and often humorous street theatre), and do different principles apply when that communication takes place within a worship service? Since certain art forms seek to express the reality of life as it is, what restrictions should be placed on the ugly and profane realities of life when that art is set in a Christian context?"

He is correct in stating that it is necessary for these and other questions to be taken seriously if this whole area is not to integrate factors that have made many Christians increasingly hesitant about the morality of some aspects of contemporary artistic expression. We find little detailed treatment, however, of the questions he has raised within the writings of

exponents of the art forms. Emphasis has been upon the usage of such forms in biblical times, and whilst very general guidelines (mentioned above) have been produced, there has been a scarcity of detailed consideration of the problem areas that have arisen in relation to the emphases of today's society. Whether this will be rectified at a future date remains to be seen.

People who are hesitant about the charismatic approach to worship are often particularly concerned about the possibility of sheer emotionalism over-riding all other factors. Whilst few would say that emotion in itself should not play a part in worship, many feel that the emotion expressed in charismatic worship is excessive, in some cases verging on the uncontrollable, and certainly indicative of a lack of balance between the emotions and the mind. However, leaders in the movement have issued repeated warnings against uncontrolled emotionalism, which is often nothing more than a self-centred indulgence that seeks the pleasure of emotion. They emphasise that a correct and appropriate expression of emotion in worship is one in which the Holy Spirit directs this expression.

Charismatics have sometimes been accused of forsaking the traditional liturgies and sacraments of their churches, but the majority of participants in the movement have in fact developed a deeper appreciation of the sacraments. Very few people believe that the gifts of the Spirit are modern replacements for sacraments, and those who have experienced baptism in the Spirit and charismatic gifts generally value the sacraments more than before. In addition, people who previously complained of a dryness and formality in church ritual often find that this comes alive with deeper meaning and power. This is particularly so in the case of Anglicans and Catholics, who have an extensive liturgical framework to their church life. It is often found that charismatic renewal illuminates particular aspects of the liturgy and helps an individual to understand them more clearly. Catholic charismatics, for example, have found that the "Come, Holy Spirit" prayer of their liturgy is a perfect expression of what those involved in the Charismatic Renewal are believing in and working for. Many of the editorials in Goodnews have followed points in the liturgical year, showing charismatics how to relate to them more fully and celebrate them. Similarly, the Anglicans for Renewal newsletter concerns itself with

many aspects of the liturgical year and remains firmly rooted in the Anglican tradition. Charismatic Renewal has thus in the majority of cases brought about a renewal in the worship and sacramental life of the individual.

The more informal versions of the liturgy which have become acceptable in recent years and contain the language and idioms of modern English have been enthusiastically received by charismatics. Informality in worship has also been incorporated comfortably into established liturgical forms, and many charismatics are positively enthusiastic about the content of their particular traditions. Speaking in tongues is in itself a form of spontaneous prayer, and many services allow for the manifestation of the charismatic gifts. There is cause for concern, however, when prayer to God becomes almost over-familiar in the sense that His holiness and awesomeness are over-looked. The reference, for example, to "Dad up there", which has been heard in a few charismatic circles, would seem to fall into this category and to denigrate the nature of God.

Although many of the house churches have rejected the structures of the denominations, most of them hold the sacraments in high esteem, and these are celebrated regularly with noticeable informality. In some, however, celebration of the sacraments is a comparatively rare occurrence, and this appears to be part and parcel of their rejection of established church practices. When they are celebrated, it is in an informal setting, often spontaneous, and noticeably free of structure.

Communion has been an important sacrament in the Charismatic Renewal as an expression both of an individual's personal relationship with Christ and of a new depth of fellowship between Christians, frequently from different churches. Although not very often a feature of charismatic prayer meetings, communion is very often the climax to charismatic conferences, and a eucharistic celebration was also a particular feature of the Catholic Days of Renewal of the nineteen-seventies. In addition to this, there has been a new interpretation of Communion as essentially a fellowship meal between Christians, an informal meal rather than a liturgical act. It has not been uncommon for Communion in this sense to take place anywhere from a home to a beach, with orange juice and bread as

the implements. A return to the practice of using a 'common cup' is noticeable, again as an expression of close fellowship. One reason for the prominence of Communion in charismatic circles is certainly its ecumenical value. Christians who have experienced unity by means of a common charismatic experience feel able to express this in Communion together in spite of theological and doctrinal differences. John Gunstone writes:

"In spite of the continuing divisions among the Churches in such things as intercommunion and lay celebration, it does not require much discernment to prophesy that by the end of the century most of us in the Christian West will be able to share in the sacrament with one another and will probably be able to recognise one another's ministries." <sup>19</sup>

He identifies the main contributory factor to this emerging unity of faith as the growing appreciation of the work of the Holy Spirit within the eucharistic liturgy. The restoration by liturgists of the epiclesis - the invocation to the Father to send the Holy Spirit through the Son on His people and on the things that have been set aside for worship - has, he says, been central to this. The establishment of the epiclesis in most new eucharistic rites, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Reformed, has resulted in a common consensus, and because of greater openness to the Holy Spirit in their own lives, and a new awareness of the presence of Christ through His activity in the Christian fellowship and in the spiritual gifts, the epiclesis enables charismatics to respond to God in praise and thanksgiving that were unimaginable before. Gunstone in fact states that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is basically a personal epiclesis which is renewed in the liturgy, and this is one reason why the new rites are such excellent vehicles for the 'extended eucharist' found at charismatic gatherings.

"It is as if the Holy Spirit has been preparing the Churches, through the work of their liturgists, for just such a celebration."

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19. John Gunstone: "The Spirit and the Lord's Supper". Theological Renewal No.10. Oct.1978. p.29.

The implications for ecumenism are evident: Gunstone claims that Christians do not have to wait until they reach a common mind over eucharistic doctrine before they can share in the Lord's Supper together<sup>20</sup>. The ecumenical work of theologians and liturgists is deeply appreciated by charismatics, basically because the former's work echoes at an intellectual level what is being experienced by the latter at a spiritual one. And here it is very much the experience that matters. Gunstone's views have not, however, gone unchallenged, and they have been criticised for errors both in fact and implication. A particular point to be noted is the implication in what he says that other Christians, past and present, have not truly received Christ in communion, lacking as they have a charismatic experience<sup>21</sup>.

Participants in the Charismatic Movement generally continue to practise the rite of baptism in accordance with the practice of their particular church. The majority of house churches practise believer's baptism only and this is usually administered by means of total immersion. Some would not object, however, if some of their members wished to have a baby baptised, although this baptism would usually be referred to a denominational church. A situation which frequently arises in the Charismatic Movement is that of people who receive baptism in the Spirit and consequently request a second baptism. This is because they feel that their first baptism was invalid, and that they desire to make a public act and witness as testimony to their renewed life and deeper commitment - or possibly initial commitment - to Christ. It is not uncommon for Christians today to have been baptized first as babies, and then as adults when they have made a personal Christian commitment. However, whilst two baptisms according to this pattern are quite common, some charismatics have more than two. We may note the case of a lady who was baptised in an Anglican church as a baby, and underwent believer's baptism in a Baptist church when she made a personal commitment to Christ. She was then converted to

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20. John Gunstone: "Spirit and Eucharist". Renewal No.64. Aug/Sept.1976. p.12.

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21. Correspondence: Theological Renewal. June 1979. p.35.

Catholicism and baptised into the Catholic Church, and later left that church and experienced a charismatic renewal, which led her to seek baptism for a fourth time. It is not uncommon for charismatics to re-baptise each other in a river as a means of bearing witness to their renewal. One minister and his wife re-baptised each other in the sea near their home, and there are countless similar cases. Whilst instances such as this one are outside the Church's control, when a request is made to a church for re-baptism, it is faced with the dilemma of whether or not to comply. The response of the Fountain Trust to this problem was consistent with its commitment to renewal within existing church structures. Tom Smail advised that first baptism was not a false foundation to be rejected but rather a divine promise to be received and appropriated in present day experience. (The similarity to the Catholic position concerning the relationship of infant baptism to baptism in the Spirit is noteworthy here.) He remarks that requests for second baptism are not usually the result of a careful consideration of all the complex issues involved, but are rather made under the impulse of what Colin Buchanan has called the 'spontaneous sacramentalism' of the Charismatic Renewal. He does feel, however, that there should be some opportunity for the expression of personal renewal which can be instituted with good theological conscience and in line with the sacramental traditions of respective churches<sup>22</sup>. But what form could this take? Samuel McCoy suggests a number of ways in which Christians may go on from their first baptism to confess their faith, renew their commitment, and confirm their baptism<sup>23</sup>. One means is by personal appropriation of baptism and profession of faith at confirmation. A second alternative is the use of the laying on of hands to express dedication and the gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism. Thirdly, he suggests that foot-washing is a means of receiving God's cleansing and offering humble service after the example of Jesus. And finally, the most regular and traditional way of appropriating the grace of one's baptism is in the

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22. T.A.Smail: editorial. Renewal No.74. April/May 1978. pp.2-4.

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23. Samuel J.D. McCoy: "Charismatic Renewal and requests for a second baptism". Theological Renewal No.8. Feb/March 1978. pp.13-21.

Lord's Supper. He remarks that the close connection between baptism and the Lord's Supper is one which is too easily forgotten. It is not a second baptism but a renewed communion which is the sign of God's renewal in the Christian. McCoy does, however, include the outline liturgy of a 'rite of renewal' which uses immersion in water and was prepared by the Doctrine Committee of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. He requests that the reader notes carefully the meaning that has been built into the rite, and says it is plain that this rite of renewal assumes baptism to be its antecedent. Tom Smail finds this a positive step towards meeting a very real pastoral need. He believes that the Holy Spirit would draw Christians towards an extension of the sacramental life that does not deny anything of God in Christian traditions, but rather enables the expression, confession and celebration of the new thing that God is doing by His Spirit<sup>24</sup>. However, this problem concerning second baptisms has been largely solved by the passage of time. As the movement has matured, there has been less haste and spontaneity in the making of decisions, and the incidence of such requests has decreased.

The Catholic sacrament of confession and penance has acquired a new depth through the Charismatic Renewal. It is often particularly connected with physical or inner healing, and charismatics testify to a revitalization of this sacrament for both priest and penitent<sup>25</sup>.

Although not actually a sacrament, fasting has become a common practice in the Charismatic Movement. There has been a renewed appreciation of the value of fasting as a means of spiritual discipline and as an aspect of prayer. Sometimes large numbers of people or whole churches will agree to fast for a period, usually in connection with a particular topic for prayer, the need for guidance, or a situation involving serious conflict with Satanic powers<sup>26</sup>. Footwashing is also

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24. op.cit.21.

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25. See in particular Michael Scanlan: The Power In Penance. Ava Maria Press. 1972.

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26. See Arthur Wallis: God's Chosen Fast. Kingsway. 1978, for a detailed consideration of the subject of fasting.

practised by some groups, in some as a sacrament, in others simply as a demonstration of humility and fellowship in accordance with the example of Jesus.

The stress upon corporate worship in the sense of individual involvement by members of the congregation has resulted in some circles in frustration with the one-man ministry. Furthermore, whilst many charismatics are hungry for teaching and eager to absorb as much as possible from the lengthy teaching sessions at their meetings and conferences, they often express a concern over the exclusive place of preaching in evangelism. They feel that the lengthy sermon, employing old-fashioned English and traditional phraseology which may be incomprehensible to someone without church connections, often proves counter-productive, conveying the impression that Christianity is out-dated, obscure and irrelevant. Evangelism should also use the means of communication with which people are familiar in their every-day lives, primarily audio-visual forms such as art, film, dance, drama, and modern music. They are of the opinion that the gospel has been too much restricted by preaching, and John Noble and Gerald Coates express this as follows:

"Most preachers fear that they will be edged out as singing and drama, dancing and creativity become priorities in the Church. We need to see that God is bigger than our preaching and we have to confess that for all the sermons preached in Western nations, we have achieved extremely little."<sup>27</sup>

But they are unsure how the situation could be redressed:

"Generally speaking, we tend to say unnecessary things and take too long to say them, but how to rectify that, bearing in mind that the most prepared message can lack life and the spontaneous may really be blessed by God, we do not know ..."

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27. John Noble and Gerald Coates: "Q & A". Fullness Vol.21. p.17.



David Watson treats the question of preaching in some depth<sup>28</sup>. He emphasises the importance of the exposition of Scripture, and in the context of evangelism, he states that whilst the divine message is not to be tampered with, it is vital to consider how this message can be most clearly understood by each particular group of hearers. The spoken or written word by itself makes less and less impact on modern society and this is a fact which he feels the Church has been tragically slow to realise, or at least to accept:

"Most churches rely heavily on the spoken or written word for communication, and then wonder why so few people find the Christian faith to be relevant. The truth is that we live in a world that is almost dominated by drama, and it is only when the church comes to terms with this in any serious and realistic way that it will be able to speak in the 'language' of today. If it fails to do this, any effective heralding of God's word will be severely handicapped. The church, in the eyes of the world, will be limping slowly along, supported on the crutches of past methods, and quite unable to keep up with the rapidly increasing speed of change within our culture ...

" ... I am convinced of the need to explore prayerfully and sensitively other forms of presentation in addition to the conventional sermon from the pulpit. Nothing can or should replace the straight proclamation of God's word, but there is much that can illustrate it most effectively ... Much of the biblical record is highly dramatic in character, and trying to present it purely in sermon form is like trying to present a beautiful country scene on a black-and-white photograph."

Watson is not denigrating preaching, but is urging that other media be used alongside it to ensure that there is effective communication with the listeners.

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28. op.cit.10. pp.204-224.

Speaking as one from the evangelical fold, Michael Harper notes the tendency of evangelical worship to be word-centred, and states that worship often takes a very secondary role to that of the reading and exposition of Scripture. He feels that this is reflected in evangelical hymns of the last hundred years, which:

" ... tend to either doctrinal expositions in verse, or pious and self-centred and individualised acts of devotion." <sup>29</sup>

Worship in evangelicalism has been devalued and downgraded, says Harper, and there has been a fear of emotionalism and a failure to recognise the enormous power of worship to make God real to people. Furthermore, the part to be played by worship as integral to effective evangelism has largely gone unrecognised. Failure to appreciate the centrality of worship is the main criticism of evangelicalism expressed by people in the Charismatic Movement, but an evangelical 'reply' may be found in the Joint Statement prepared by both charismatics and evangelicals<sup>30</sup>. In its section on worship, the Joint Statement seeks a balance of the characteristic features of 'evangelical' and 'charismatic' worship, believing that they will complement and enrich each other and also correct the imbalances in each. Many charismatic gatherings would thus benefit from order, teaching, and some robustly doctrinal 'evangelical' hymns, whilst numerous evangelical services and prayer meetings would benefit from more spontaneity, greater participation, a more relaxed atmosphere, "the gentle, loving wonder and praise of some renewal songs, and learning to listen to God in times of prayer and meditation".

The significance of the Charismatic Movement in bringing about grass-roots ecumenism is acknowledged throughout the Church, with enthusiasm by some, with concern by others. It is the experience of unity

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29. op.cit.3. pp.66.

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30. Joint Statement: Church of England Evangelical Council and Fountain Trust. Theological Renewal Occasional Paper No.1. April/May 1977.

in shared worship that has been instrumental in bringing this about, and Harper is correct in saying:

"They (Roman Catholics and Protestants) have come together in liturgical freedom and joy. In singing together they have melted into a new oneness, which is hard to separate out again." <sup>31</sup>

A feature of Michael Harper's writings has been their practicality. Always eager to see the Renewal happening and not merely being theorised over, he is quick to offer practical suggestions, and this is so in his integration of charismatic worship and the more traditional forms. He finds no problem in integrating the two, provided there is willingness to allow change:

"Those used to a free type of service can easily allow more participation by the congregation in the services of worship, and the gifts of the Spirit can be manifested in such a situation, while in the Church of England it has already been demonstrated that there is no need to dispense with the liturgy to make room for them. In future services we ought to allow more scope for an enlightened congregation to take part, as is indeed already being done in many churches. Extempore prayer should be allowed, and a time can easily be set apart for the exercise of spiritual gifts in either the communion service or the morning and evening services, provided, of course, the congregation understands what is going on, and is prepared to accept them as gifts of God." <sup>32</sup>

These words were written in 1968, and the fact that this integration has been successfully achieved in many churches and that the arrangements described above are now commonplace says much for Harper's foresight and wisdom. However, in some this has not happened, and the resultant division

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31. Michael Harper: Let My People Grow. Hodder and Stoughton. 1977. pp.53-54.

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32. Michael Harper: Walk In The Spirit. Hodder and Stoughton. 1968. p.87.

and disunity have resulted in some charismatics leaving their churches, either to join others where the integration has been more successful or to form new churches of like-minded people. Harper also writes of the need for a balance between freedom and order in worship. The following is in the context of a discussion concerning prayer, but may be applied equally to worship in general:

"... the freedom may begin to degenerate into laziness, and may need the discipline of form and order. Ideally, there should be room for harmony between the two, while always being open to fresh promptings of the Spirit, for He knows that we need variety and change in these things ... How easily the mind sinks back after the stirring of the Holy Spirit to preconceived ideas, set ways, the planned routine and traditional attitudes. But the Holy Spirit will bring fresh and original light to the one who is continuously open to Him, with new and often unpredictable blessings." <sup>33</sup> (my italics)

This was also written in 1968, and at this early stage Harper had recognised the necessity of a balance which many charismatic enthusiasts failed to see at the time, but came to acknowledge at a later date.

It is somewhat paradoxical that charismatic worship can be one of the most attractive aspects of the Charismatic Movement, yet at the same time the most effective repellent for some non-participants. Consideration and understanding for such people is urged by the leadership, who recognised from the outset that conflict was inevitable. Indeed, Richard Hare identifies as signs of spiritual maturity the unthreatened acceptance by an individual or a congregation of styles of spirituality which contrast with their own, and the desire to avoid the shedding of inhibitions in such a way as to put off or upset other people<sup>34</sup>. So what is the "newly released"

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33. op.cit.31. p.45.

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34. Richard Hare: "Freedom and the growth of worship". Renewal No.70. Aug/Sept. 1977. pp.16-18.

to do when a totally predictable worship leaves him feeling completely stifled? Hare suggests three things. First of all, a greater freedom in worship calls for the exercise of really positive ministry, and particularly for discernment with regard to gifts and their origin. Second, there is the need for freedom and spontaneity to be given liturgical expression within the general terms in which the particular worshipping tradition has developed. There must be a sensitivity to this need, and it will avoid the alienation of those who still need and desire that tradition. In particular, the young must show genuine concern and gentleness for the middle-aged and elderly. As an example of a way in which many congregations have found initial freedom from the rigidity of their liturgical structure, Hare describes "the creative use of silence". Unscripted freedom in short and simple prayers during silences in the liturgy have encouraged increased participation by those present, and the extended Peace can also be a point of breakthrough on special occasions, although, he advises, those who do not like it must be reassured that it is not going to happen every time. An attitude of 'give and take' such as Hare advocates has certainly contributed towards the resolving of problems and conflicts between 'traditionalists' and 'charismatics' in the sphere of worship.

But if many traditionalists have been won round to charismatic worship, a considerable number of charismatics have come to appreciate the traditional, and recently there has been a spontaneous integration of the two. The depth of meaning in well-known, traditional hymns is highly valued, and many church song-books and song-sheets now contain a mixture of ancient and modern. Chris Edmondson has detected a refreshing depth on the charismatic music scene. He notes that a variety of instruments are now used in worship in addition to the guitar, a number of churches having developed 'family service orchestras' which involve both young and old:

"... it seems that the guitar and organ are getting on better now than they did in earlier days!"<sup>35</sup>

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35. Chris Edmondson: "Renewal music scene". Renewal No.85. Feb/March 1980. pp.31-33.

Much of the material recently produced has more depth to it, and he notes that Celebration Services (the Fisherfolk's publishing agency) have produced a book of descants to traditional hymns and a book of anthems, requiring a choir of a reasonably high standard if they are to be sung as intended. Whereas the Fisherfolk music was once almost universally used in the Charismatic Movement, the tendency now is for churches and individuals to produce their own words and music, or new music to portions of Scripture. Chris Edmondson concludes:

"We have come a long way from the trendy songs of the early '60s which were supposed to brighten up our worship, but which sound 'old hat' now. The Holy Spirit is renewing the Church, and out of that has come and is coming some wonderful music. Some of it may be forgotten within two or three years, but much of it will (I believe) stand the test of time, and most important of all, it comes from a real encounter with the Lord."

The last sentence contains the key to the attitude to worship in the Charismatic Movement; the means of expression is really secondary, for what matters is that it expresses and conveys a real encounter with God. Experience of God is translated into music and physical movement and any means by which the experience may be expressed is actively explored. Will further developments take place, or have the possibilities been exhausted? The recent integration of modern and traditional suggests that where the expression of worship is concerned, this may be so, and there appears to have been a levelling off where new forms are concerned, although new experience in well-used forms continues to occur. Liturgy itself, however, offers an inexhaustible scope for development and innovation, and it may be to this particular area that the attention of charismatics will turn in coming years.

Chapter 13.ESCHATOLOGY

Most participants in the Charismatic Movement anticipate the second coming of Jesus and tend to interpret current events in eschatological terms. But this characteristic is by no means confined to the Charismatic Movement and may be found in various groups throughout the Church. Indeed, in western society in general, increasing attention has been focussed upon the various forms which the end of the world may take. This is accompanied by popular literature which concerns itself with doom and disaster and amounts in effect to a secular brand of apocalyptic. Eschatology is thus a feature of the age.

It was certainly to be expected that the Charismatic Movement would show some degree of eschatological emphasis. Any movement whose participants have come into a new realization and experience of the tangible reality of Jesus is likely to focus afresh upon His visible return. In addition to this, the Charismatic Movement has many of the features of a revivalist movement, and a concern with the end-time is characteristic of such movements. Classical Pentecostalism affords an interesting parallel here. It too stresses a personal revival in the life of its members in the form of a baptism in the Spirit and speaking in tongues experience, and the advent of Classical Pentecostalism was understood by many to mark the start of the final age of mankind and thus to herald the return of Christ. The early charismatics understood the contemporary Charismatic Movement in the same light: leaders drew attention to the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel quoted by Peter at Pentecost (Acts ch.2. vv.17-21), just as their Classical Pentecostal predecessors had done. The imminence of the Second Coming of Christ therefore came to the fore once again, and the Charismatic Renewal was viewed as the last great outpouring of the Holy Spirit before this was to take place. However, the eschatological hopes of Classical Pentecostalism gave way to the organization of new church structures in much the same way as the delay of the Parousia affected the New Testament church. The Charismatic Movement has progressed in the same way from stress upon

personal revival to concentration upon the renewal of existing ecclesiastical structures. This was a very rapid development, and one of the reasons why the Charismatic Movement has remained at the heart of the Church is because this was where the energies of participants were immediately directed. In the Charismatic Movement too, the pattern has thus been repeated whereby eschatological fervour has been channelled instead into the Church. Eschatological hopes are tempered by concern about the state of the established Church and its need to be renewed, united, and engaged in witness before it is ready to take its place as the Bride of Christ. It is noticeable that eschatological expectation is highest in the house churches which have resisted structuralization, and sought to maintain a flexibility. But the fact that a certain amount of structuralization is inevitable for smooth functioning if nothing else, may well eventually result in the establishment of the structures which these fellowships so anxiously avoid. It will be interesting to see whether their eschatological hopes become more long-term if this does happen.

Within the Charismatic Movement, eschatological concern is found least amongst Catholic participants, and the reason for this is evident. Catholic tradition has consistently focussed upon the Church as the Bride of Christ here on earth and Catholic charismatics have automatically adopted this stance. Their deep concern for their church surpasses that of other charismatics, and eschatological hope is manifest instead in the form of ecclesiastical hope. Where Protestant charismatics might express eschatological concern, there is thus a tendency in Catholic circles to express in its place concern about the Church.

The occurrence of material concerning the Second Coming of Christ has become less frequent as time has gone by. Increasing satanic activity, and the resulting confrontation with evil powers in deliverance ministry, brought many people to the conclusion that Satan was 'running out of time', and that the Parousia must be very close. Speculation about the Parousia was, however, largely discouraged, and reduced emphasis upon demonic activity has been accompanied by a corresponding decline in attention to eschatological matters.



Eschatology has received most consideration in the context of prophecy, and the most widely publicized prophecy has been that given by David Wilkerson at the Lutheran Charismatic Conference in Minneapolis in the summer of 1973<sup>1</sup>. Wilkerson's vision and the commercial products which were developed from it were widely rejected by leading figures in the Charismatic Movement. This eschatological vision was publicized at a time when prophecy about the end-times was rife, and Renewal reports Pete Meadows, the editor of Buzz magazine, as regretting the way that Christians tend to jump without question onto every new bandwagon that comes along. Renewal notes his comment that:

"... seemingly the more sensational a thing is the less we question it."

The report continues:

"Mr. Meadows went on to criticize 'mini-Wilkersons'. He wrote, 'we appear to have reached a point where the Bible, by itself, is not exciting enough.' "

It seems that Michael Harper would agree with this. He warns against an eschatology which extracts texts from the Bible at random and attaches them to bizarre and irrational sequences of events. He advocates building interpretations only on "rocklike certainties" and remaining agnostic about the passages which do not yield a clear meaning, although he leaves open the possibility that they may yet do so<sup>2</sup>. It is inevitable that

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1. The contents of this prophecy were published in book form. See: David Wilkerson: The Vision. Lakeland. 1974. For an example of popular, prophetic literature which has circulated in the Charismatic Movement, see: Hal Lindsay: The Late Great Planet Earth. Lakeland. 1971.

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2. News and comment: "Buzzing the prophets", Renewal No.53. Oct/Nov 1974. p.5.

eschatological theory should frequently appear in the context of prophecy, and the Charismatic Movement has reacted to such prophecy with caution, seeking to redirect attention to the renewing of the Church and the evangelizing of those outside it. It is acknowledged generally throughout the Church that detailed interpretation of the Bible's teaching about the course of events at the end-time is a very complex matter, which is often best left alone. No one position - millennialist, pre-millennialist, or a-millennialist - is shared by all participants in the Charismatic Movement, nor does any one of them predominate. Many charismatics have not considered the issue in any great depth; it is sufficient in their view simply to know that Christ will return and that the Church must concentrate upon its mission until He does. We may, however, consider two dissimilar views which have been expressed by people moving in different circles within the Charismatic Movement. The first of these is contained in an article by John MacLauchlin in Fullness magazine<sup>3</sup>. MacLauchlin believes that Rev.ch.20. vv.1-10 points to a Millennium which can be identified with a future, manifest reign of Christ over the earth. Criticising "the unwarranted literalism of such recent and superficial prophetic opinion" which has discredited this interpretation and the whole concept of a future earthly reign, he continues:

"God's purpose is not to release man from earth into a totally unrelated sphere, but that he should enter in spirit into the heavens, and interpret and translate that invisible reality into the sphere of earth ... God's purpose is to build us into a city, a new Jerusalem, and bring that down out of the unseen, making it visible and extant on earth (Rev.ch.21.v.2). Only in this way will the purpose for man's creation be realised."

Revelation chapters 21 and 22 are taken not as a description of 'eternity', but as an expanded description of chapter 20, for the sphere of activity, states MacLauchlin, is clearly the face of this earth. The victorious saints come to life and reign with Christ here for a thousand years, although this period of time is not necessarily to be interpreted

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3. J. MacLauchlin: "The Millennium". Fullness Vol.19. pp.22-23.

literally. Relative to the three-and-a-half years of the period of prior manifestation of the first fruits of this rule (Rev.cc.11-12;14v.1), however, this period is vast. The nature of the Millenium is described as follows:

"The benefits of the Messiah are made available to the whole of mankind, and the kingdom of God is demonstrated before them. Thus there begins a period of great social change and renewal as the nations, cities and industries of man are directed into God's ways. The people of God, and Christ Himself, are visibly vindicated and seen in resurrection glory (Col.ch.1.vv.1-3), walking face-to-face among mortal men, shepherding and directing their lives and affairs."

Scripture is silent about what lies beyond, and this is taken as indicative that concentration should be upon this millennial rule and that Christians should trust in God for whatever may follow. This eschatology is fully consistent with the rest of typical Fullness circle teaching, as will become evident later.

The second view is contained in an article by E.L. Fenton, published in Dunamis magazine<sup>4</sup>, although not necessarily representative of those in charismatic Methodist circles. This view purports that Christians will leave the earth in the 'Rapture' before a period of great tribulation for the world, and that Christ will come again in glory after the tribulation is over. Fenton finds significance in Mt.ch.24.v.36, which he assumes refers to 1948 when Israel again became a nation:

"If a generation is 40 years, then by 1988 our Lord could have come in glory, and as the tribulation is a period of 7 years prior to this, 1981, this year could be our blessed hope when He comes for His church; it all depends on how long you regard as a generation."

Many charismatics have identified the Common Market with the ten nation

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4. E.L. Fenton: "Is He Coming Soon?". Dunamis No.36. July 1981. pp.13-17.

confederacy to be headed by the Anti-Christ, and Fenton is one of them. At the time of his article, Greece had recently become the tenth member, and the fact that the acceptance of Spain and Portugal into membership would bring the number to twelve, led him to believe that something dramatic must happen soon. He concludes his article with a summary of recent prophecies received by charismatics which state that the end is imminent. One of these is particularly specific, warning of the coming tribulation and stating that Jesus will gather Christians together and take them to Heaven, whilst the earth will pass through the tribulation. We therefore have here a combination of a traditional interpretation of eschatology with charismatic prophecy, and one which is completely different to that expressed by MacLauchlan. Whilst the latter is by no means a new one, it is more of a minority view, and once again a house church grouping has stood apart from a majority denominational position.

The view eschewed by the Fullness circle is, however, part of a more highly developed eschatology which is central to the objectives of this group. In their literature and in their meetings there is frequent reference to the function of their fellowships as "the body for bringing the Lord back". It is believed that a Church which has faithfully obeyed and followed Jesus and fulfilled His purposes is intrinsically linked with the Second Coming. There is a belief that the current condition of the Church is delaying the Parousia, and that obedience by Christians to the guidance of God can affect the timing of this:

"As we learn from the masterly manner in which Jesus dealt with temptation ... we too can know his mind, live his life, do his works, and hasten his return."<sup>5</sup> (my italics)

And again:

"If we remain divided and pre-occupied with side issues, another generation will pass without seeing the Lord Jesus ... The end is near, but our mighty Saviour will not return for a worn out

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5. Gerald Coates & Hugh Thompson: Free From Sin. Private publication.

bride who has had her day, for a woman defiled with schism and wrinkled with neglect." <sup>6</sup>

This belief in the body for bringing Jesus back ties in with the millennialist approach adopted by John MacLauchlan above. He presents the Messianic Kingdom as the goal of all the prophets and states that for Jesus, the time of such full manifestation depended upon the emergence of a people who would embody and display the reality of His kingdom. The manifestation of the Messianic Kingdom depends on its practical outworking in a people on earth: the Kingdom is in reality now (Jn.ch.18.vv.36-7), but this reality will one day be seen by all the world and this will be the prophesied Messianic reign. In order for the full earthly effect of the reality of the Kingdom of God to come, heaven must be translated into earth and it is the Church that accomplishes this translation, being itself the link between heaven and earth (Eph.ch.1.v.23; Rev.ch.5.v.10; 1 Cor.ch.15.vv.20-28):

"Sometimes it appears in the prophets that the Messianic Kingdom will come very soon; at other times it appears more remote. In fact, we are wrong to tie it in to a fixed time-scale, a pre-determined chronological prophetic programme. The consummation will come when a people emerge who so enter into Christ's victory that they rule and reign with him." <sup>7</sup>

The actual timing of eschatological events is thus understood to be flexible, and dependent upon the response of the present-day Church. The Fullness circle believe that they - though not necessarily they exclusively - are involved in this working out of eschatology, in their seeking to "live out" the kingdom and the principles of "kingdom life" in their day-to-day lives. The 'Question and Answer' pages of Fullness shed further light on this matter. In reply to the question whether the present

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6. J. Noble: Forgive Us Our Denominations. Private publication.

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7. op.cit.3.

generation will see "the fulfillment of God's purposes", MacLauchlan states:

"I do not believe it is true to say we will see the fulfillment, but I am convinced it is true to say we can see it! To say that this generation must be the one to bring the King back is to imply a fixed prophetic time-scale, and I do not believe there is any such thing."<sup>8</sup>

He notes the open-ended nature of fulfillment of prophecy and the emphasis upon response with reference to Rev.ch.1.vv.1,3; ch.2; ch.3; 2 Pet.ch.3.v.12; and the book of Daniel, interpreting this as showing that Christians can indeed influence the course of events:

"Far from being discouraged into saying that so many earlier generations hoped for fulfilment and were disappointed, I take great encouragement from this. The possibility of fulfilment was clearly put before earlier generations, so there can be no fixed, decreed time-scale. In previous generations, many principles of prophecy were fulfilled, but none of them 'closed the circle' and brought end-time fulfilment of prophecy. The way is wide open for this generation to respond to God and see the completion of his purposes."<sup>9</sup>

Eschatological interest, paradoxical as it may at first seem, is therefore focussed on the present, but this is in a different way to the Catholic charismatics. The Fullness circle believe that they are taking an active part in the response to God which will bring about the completion of His purposes and the return of Jesus. They regard themselves as being actively involved in the eschatology that they believe in, and express optimism as to its outcome:

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8. J. MacLauchlan: "Q and A". Fullness Vol.12. p.15.

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9. *ibid.*

"There are very encouraging signs in the Church. The world seems to be approaching the time of fulness of Babylon. In a sense the stage seems to be set. We can so respond to the God of glory, to our risen Lord, that not only will the principles of God's dealings be fulfilled in our generation, but also the 'goal will come'." 10

The doctrine of the Fullness circle is embraced by a considerable number of people still in the established denominations, and its influence is spread by the Cobham Fellowship's annual "Kingdom Life" fortnight, which is attended by people from other house church or denominational circles. As the fellowships of the Fullness circle become more established, and perhaps, in spite of their present resistance to it, accept a progressive structuralization, will their eschatological fervour diminish? If they follow the pattern found in church history then this is very likely, but the repetition of previous patterns is precisely what they are striving to avoid, and this is not only the test by which their eschatology will be vindicated, but also the one by which they expect to be judged by God.

A 'doctrine of the remnant' is sometimes found in charismatic circles, and this revolves around the belief that God is preparing and using a 'remnant' of obedient believers for the return of Christ, having virtually forsaken the rest of the Church. The degree of exclusiveness of this remnant varies: some people view themselves as part of a fairly large remnant, whilst for some house churches the doctrine of a much smaller remnant figures strongly in their theological self-understanding. The doctrine is based upon the contents of the book of Haggai, and the fact that only a remnant at this time remained faithful to God and continued to know His direction and blessing. It is reinforced by continual reference throughout the Old Testament to a faithful few within Israel, who genuinely sought God and did not close themselves off from Him. Many house churches in particular believe that the same situation is to be found today in the Christian Church, and this is of course consistent with their large-scale rejection of the denominations. The more exclusive and elitist groups

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10. *ibid.*

believe that they, and they alone, are the remnant, the only people who are discerning God's will accurately and will follow Him to the end. But others do not go to this extreme, believing in the doctrine of the remnant in a more general sense. Although they accept that 'the remnant' is a biblical principle, Haggai is interpreted slightly differently in the sense of the remnant being a pioneering group which others will follow. The remnant is therefore neither exclusive nor final. When understood in this sense some groups feel that although they are involved in the remnant they are not the remnant itself. Others would not presume that everyone in their fellowship is involved in the remnant community, and the concept thus becomes a very fluid one. 'Remnant theology' is sometimes acknowledged in its more general sense even if it is not specifically taught. Several groups expressed the belief that although they were not a special group which stood out from the rest in God's purposes, something was developing and happening there that was significantly involved with these purposes. They felt, however, that they were not necessarily more than a "cog in the wheel of God's purposes", and their position is perhaps most accurately described not as 'remnant theology', but as 'pioneer theology'.

Whether remnant theology does in fact have a sound biblical basis as its exponents claim is debatable. Biblical interpretation is an area fraught with difficulties, and one in which errors have too frequently been made by reading into the text more than is justified. Where actual biblical principles are concerned, there is the added difficulty of ascertaining whether something which applied during a particular period is applicable in the same way to the contemporary situation. One feels that where 'remnant theology' is rigidly applied, there is insufficient biblical basis. Whilst the references to the remnant in Haggai might describe a situation which may arise at other points in time as well, it is assuming too much to build a doctrine around it. 'Pioneer theology' is a much more general concept, and as such it fits more easily into the New Testament concept of the Church as the pioneering body, which is to bring 'salt to the earth' and extend the Kingdom of God.

The doctrine of the remnant which remains faithful to God, and is set apart by Him from those professing believers who are unfaithful in heeding His voice, is clearly taught by John Noble in his booklet Forgive Us Our



Denominations<sup>11</sup>. The remnant is envisaged as "returning to build the old waste places", and there are references to Haggai and to Joel's promise of "an outpouring on all flesh in the last days". The context in the booklet seems to suggest that this outpouring is still in the future. This is interesting in view of the fact that most Classical Pentecostals and participants in the Charismatic Movement regard this prophecy as already having been fulfilled in this century. The writer speaks as if the Charismatic Movement is either of little significance now or has failed in its purpose, and he looks to the future for something of greater import.

"Now, having seen something of the awful mess we are in, surely we long for renewal, and I am confident that God's word will encourage us to hope for something more."

This is consistent with the general belief in the house churches that they have moved beyond the Charismatic Movement to a new stage in God's purposes. Noble speaks of a longing for:

"... a restoration of the former things to bring in the last great harvest before Jesus returns."

If he is referring to the New Testament church, along with its comparative absence of organised meetings and paraphernalia, one wonders if his view of it is not too idealistic. Noble believes that the present denominational differences are a major delaying factor in the return of Christ, and are not of God, but can be accurately equated with "party spirit":

"The day of divisions must end. A united remnant church is inevitable in these last times to prepare the way of the Lord, to shout as a voice in the wilderness."

Further eschatological material is to be found in another booklet by John Noble called First Apostles, Last Apostles<sup>12</sup>. This publication

11. op.cit.6.

12. J. Noble: First Apostles, Last Apostles. Private publication.

outlines his case for the reappearance of apostles in the last days, through which the world is, he believes, currently passing. Noble writes:

"I am convinced that the rediscovery of the truth concerning the apostolic and prophetic ministries, will play a vital role in establishing and bringing to fullness the body of Christ in preparation for the return of Jesus. It will also be an essential step leading up to the final great evangelistic thrust before this glorious climax of history."

He is totally convinced of the truth and urgency of his thesis:

"Every trace of unbelief concerning the appearance of apostles must be dealt with, so that we may watch and pray with faith for the men of God's appointment to come forth in power. These men will move through the church subduing the evil forces which divide and strip the saints of their true glory. They will unite and release an army under God which will accomplish His purpose in these end-times."

Central to it is the idea that the course of revival over the past three to four centuries has covered ground which corresponds to that of the Church's early decline in reverse. It is expected that the Holy Spirit will be poured out in "latter rains", and that today's Christians will not only enter into the same life and lifestyle as that of the early Christians, but will also press beyond this to a "fullness" which the majority never knew. In summary, Noble believes that the Church will return full-circle and will receive additional blessing when it arrives there. The reference above by MacLauchlan to 'closing the circle' also becomes clearer in the light of this. In terms of the recovery of the Church, what was first to disappear will be the last to reappear as the heavenly programme is completed, and this is why the reappearance of apostles is felt to be of such significance. Jesus Himself is the 'first and last' but next to Himself He set "'first' apostles", according to 1 Cor.ch.12.v.28. Although the wrong men later stepped into the vacuum of authority left by their death, now "His people" - which presumably is intended to imply that not all Christians are included - are being prepared again to receive apostolic

ministry. On the basis of Haggai ch.2.v.9 and John ch.16.v.13, Noble states that this ministry will lay the foundations of the "latter house", the glory of which will exceed the first because the Spirit of truth has been welcomed in. However, the only biblical grounds quoted by Noble to substantiate his claim that apostles are indeed the first and the last in this programme, are 1 Cor. ch.12.v.28 ('God has set some in the church, first apostles ...') and 1 Cor. ch.4.v.9 ('I think that God has set forth us apostles last ...'). These are removed completely from their context and Noble's case rests upon a faulty exegesis of Scripture. It is therefore disconcerting that he should present it with such fervour and dogmatism:

"So it's first apostles and last apostles, the master builders who have seen the plans and are gifted by God to put his work on a right basis with the help of the other ministries ... This must, it will happen, in one generation; Jesus will see the travail of His soul and be satisfied."

The treatise of First Apostles, Last Apostles can be rejected as totally lacking in scriptural warrant. In spite of this, however, it has had some considerable influence upon the eschatology of many house church members. It seems that the caution exercised by leaders of the denominational Charismatic Movement with respect to eschatological prophecy and interpretation would be beneficial here.

If the denominational Charismatic Movement has not produced such detailed eschatology, it has nevertheless shown evidence of what we may call a general eschatological awareness. The possible imminence of Christ's return is often mentioned and is viewed from two perspectives. On the one hand it will be the time when Christians will enter into the full riches of their inheritance as heirs and sons of God, and will thus be a time of great happiness and rejoicing. But on the other hand, it will be the time after which unbelievers will no longer have the opportunity to turn to Christ and to receive salvation. This acts as a spur to missionary work and evangelism, and one finds in many charismatic groups a vivid awareness of the fate of those who do not accept Christ as their saviour. Nevertheless, Douglas McBain has remarked that the themes of wrath,

judgment to come, and hell are not much considered nowadays. He wonders whether this may be because it is felt that they mar the image of the power-packed, experience-orientated Christian life that is often projected<sup>13</sup>. Certainly, charismatics have often been criticised for offering a one-sided presentation of the nature of God, concentrating on His love and forgiveness and failing to mention His hatred of sin and the judgment that awaits. The emphasis very often is solely upon the joy and splendour that will attend the Second Coming. McBain seeks to counter this, reminding people that God's wrath will be manifested when the day of judgment dawns and the impenitent are cast into hell.

Eschatology in the Charismatic Movement remains essentially optimistic, looking beyond judgment to the glory of Christ when the whole of creation acknowledges His rule. But a certain tension does exist between this optimistic eschatology and a more pessimistic approach. The latter shares at least to some degree the attitude increasingly adopted in western society, which senses increasing misfortune and imminent disaster for the world. John Orme Mills noted this and considered it in some detail in an article in Theological Renewal<sup>14</sup>. A reader of Renewal also recognised the problem and suggested that the answer be found in a consciously adopted optimism:

"How can we adopt an aggressively evangelistic attitude if we are deeply absorbed with the prospect of impending disaster? Unless we have an optimistic view of God's plan for man we might as well forget all attempts to evangelise."<sup>15</sup>

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13. D. McBain: "The Witness (Man of Destiny: Part 2). Renewal No.53. Oct/Nov 1974. p.26.

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14. J. Orme Mills: "Apocalyptic in the Praying Community". Theological Renewal. No.14. Feb 1980. pp.28-35.

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15. letter: "Purpose of revival". Renewal No.51. June/July 1974. p.6.

This attitude is generally the one that predominates, even if it is maintained with some difficulty. Some have sought to escape from reality into the comfort of a cosy charismatic circle, in which it is possible to lose oneself in the atmosphere of elation and to forget the world outside. Gerald Coates has written:

"There is the danger of feeling that the world doesn't want to hear anyway and we just need to stick it out as God's alternative people while the world crashes headlong into the judgment of God. Such a total lack of care and concern will not mark the final generations of the people of God.

"Far from being pessimistic, I am optimistic that the Church will be seen to be the only alternative to the ways of men and religiosity. A people where God is not so much overruling as He is ruling."<sup>16</sup>

His last sentence is particularly significant and holds the key to the resolution of the tension: an acknowledgement of God's active sovereignty in the life of obedient believers and an emphasis upon following His directions. It is in groups in which this is the predominant factor in the contemplation of eschatology that the tension is minimal.

Michael Harper is representative of the approach of the Charismatic Movement in the statement which he provides to guide attitudes towards the return of Christ<sup>17</sup>. The Bible states firmly that Christ is coming again (Tit.ch.2.v.13), and it follows from this that Christians are always to be ready for the possibility of that return at any moment. But until that return occurs, it is right to continue with the work which God has given one to do (Lk.ch.29.v.13). Harper notes that there will be signs to

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16. G. Coates: Q & A. Private publication.

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17. M. Harper: Editorial ("Panicky Prophets"). Renewal No.50. April/May 1974. p.6.

indicate when the return is close, one of which is related to the Jews (Lk.ch.21.v.24). God is concerned with Jews as well as with Christians. This in particular is a theme that is stressed by charismatics, who often have a special interest in the work of missionary organizations which direct themselves specifically towards the Jewish people. Finally, Harper notes that cosmic and celestial movements of a dramatic kind, affecting the earth, and especially the sea, seem in the Bible to be another sign of the imminent return of Christ (Lk.ch.21.vv.25-27). He suggests that the balanced attitude towards the Second Coming is to be ready for it, yet at the same time to accept the fact that there may be many years yet before it happens, and to rejoice in the opportunity for evangelism that this would provide. The Charismatic Movement has largely adopted this position with regard to eschatology.

Chapter 14.ECUMENISM AND DENOMINATIONS

The Charismatic Movement has adherents in all the major denominations, and because these people have chosen to remain there, the denominations have been affected by the tenets and emphases of the movement. The Charismatic Movement has thus permeated and influenced the Church in Britain to a marked degree.

Over the years, the establishment of denominational organizations to represent the Charismatic Renewal and provide an 'official' means of contact with denominational leaders has led in turn to a more official recognition by the latter. The Catholic Renewal provides a clear example of this. The establishment of its National Service Committee both provided a point of contact for the church authorities and itself sought to increase contact with them. The appointment by the Catholic authorities of Bishop Langton Fox in 1977 as the "Ecclesiastical Assistant to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal" effectively made him the Renewal's representative on the Episcopal Conference of bishops for England and Wales<sup>1</sup>. The Charismatic Movement in the Catholic Church was thus given a mark of recognition, and thereby virtually placed on an official footing.

The Anglican Church was one of the first denominations in which the Charismatic Movement emerged, and the Anglicans For Renewal newsletter circulated information amongst interested recipients. Autumn of 1981 saw the launching of Anglican Renewal Ministries (ARM) based at Lamplugh House, the Conference and Renewal Centre near Driffield, North Humberside, and this will undoubtedly lead to a greater organizational impetus for the Charismatic Renewal in Anglicanism. It is the intention of ARM to maintain contact with the Church of England Board for Mission and Unity, and a series of conferences are planned for 1982 and 1983. In spite of a general

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1. In 1981, Bishop Victor Guazzelli took over this position from Bishop Fox following the latter's retirement because of ill-health.

awareness of the presence of the Charismatic Movement within the Church of England, the authorities have been slow to produce an official report on the phenomenon. A General Synod report, The Charismatic Movement in the Church of England, was finally published in September 1981, and was the first official report on the subject. Whilst recognising aspects of the Movement which needed oversight and correction, it also expressed positive approval of Charismatic Renewal:

"... it has been happening to and among Christians who assert that this experience of the Spirit is the proper outcome of their Anglicanism, that the charismatic movement belongs within the Church of England and its members are not to be driven out. They feel that the whole Church of England stands to gain by a determined holding on in love to what the movement has to offer, and to the hot-headed zealots it may throw up. We concur with this, and look for much growth in true spirituality to flow from this channel of God's power at the heart of our corporate Christian life." <sup>2</sup>

The Report resulted from a motion which was presented to the General Synod by Colin Buchanan in July 1978, and was followed by extensive debate both then and in November of that year, when an amendment by the Standing Committee to remove the necessity for a report was narrowly defeated. It was decided that the Board for Mission and Unity should be responsible for the report in the light of the ecumenical significance of the Charismatic Movement and its implications for mission and evangelism. Anglican charismatics regard the publishing of the document as a milestone in the development of the movement in their denomination and are greatly encouraged by its positive contents.

The General Synod's report correctly noted that the Charismatic Movement in Anglicanism is not specifically an evangelical movement, but that it also encompasses an active Anglo-Catholic group. Anglo-Catholic

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2. The Charismatic Movement in the Church of England. CIO Publishing. 1981. pp.2-3.



Days of Renewal have frequently been publicised in the Anglicans For Renewal newsletter, and the Renewal continues to grow in this branch of the Church of England. In 1980, Renewal reported on the seventh annual Anglo-Catholic charismatic conference, with a description of the proceedings which concluded:

"Other intriguing happenings included some dancing in the aisles at the eucharist and a midnight disco at which a friar and a nun were among the dancers.

"Guitar playing reverend mothers who speak in tongues, eucharistic dancing in the aisles, and friars and nuns jiving at midnight discos, are more than enough to set the eyebrows of Anglo-Catholic traditionalists shooting off into space, and a note of incredulity duly crept into the staid columns of the Church Times when it reported these events.

"But as conference chairman Peter Peterken pointed out, it was all 'an expression of the deep joy that we feel in God'. " 3

The Baptist Union was quicker off the mark in providing an official evaluation of the Charismatic Movement, but even so this was not concluded until 1978. It was in this year that a Baptist Union working group finished a three year study of the effects of the Charismatic Movement within the Baptist Church. The group decided that the denomination's churches had much to learn about fellowship from the movement, and it acknowledged the failure of some traditional churches to be sensitive and understanding towards those who have experienced charismatic renewal, although failure in this area was often common to both the parties. However, the group also warned against the danger of a new authoritarianism in church government, the devaluation of the gift of administration, a tendency by some churches to be anti-denominational, a growing intolerance on the part of some to women in church office, and a neglect, especially

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3. Report: "Expressions of Anglo-Catholic joy". Renewal No.88. Aug/Sept 1980. pp.4-5.

amongst the young, of 'the God-given gifts of the mind in searching for and wrestling with God's living truth'. This fairly critical tone is balanced somewhat by a welcome for greater freedom in talking about one's faith, the rediscovery of the healing ministry, an increasing commitment to personal devotions, and greater congregational participation in worship<sup>4</sup>. A very loosely structured group called "Baptists For Life and Growth" has sought to support the Charismatic Movement within this denomination, mainly by linking together ministers of like mind. There has been no Baptist charismatic periodical, nor have there been conferences specifically for Baptists. However, a consultation in July 1981<sup>5</sup> of fifty Baptist ministers involved in the Charismatic Movement discussed a deepening of commitment within the group, and this opens up the possibility of the development of a more organized structure in the future. In addition to this, the group discussed the possibility of two of their number being set free from their churches to exercise a wider ministry, and the similarity of this concept with that of the apostolic ministries of the house churches is noteworthy.

British Methodism has been comparatively slow to accept the Charismatic Movement. In 1972, a Methodist charismatic magazine called Dunamis was started, and its circulation has grown to approximately six thousand, the vast majority of recipients being Methodists. In 1981, the readership was asked for its opinion on the possible establishment of a "Dunamis Renewal Fellowship", but although over two hundred positive replies were received, and far fewer negative ones, this represents only a small proportion of the readership, which perhaps indicates that the need for such a Fellowship is felt by only a few. Recognition of the Charismatic Movement in Methodism came at the 1975 Methodist Conference when the retiring President spoke of the Renewal as one of the signs of hope in the denomination. In addition to this, the Conference elected Ross

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4. Report: "Baptist churches 'have much to learn' from renewal movement". Renewal No.75. June/July 1978. p.6.

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5. Report: "Baptists confer on renewal". Renewal No.96. Dec.1981/Jan.1982. pp.13-14.

Peart, one of the editors of Dunamis, to represent British Methodism at the World Methodist Council in Dublin the following year. Dunamis has consistently expressed a desire to see Christian unity, and this is repeated in a recent editorial by Charles Clarke<sup>6</sup>.

The impact of the Charismatic Movement in the United Reformed Church has steadily increased over the years. The Group for Evangelism and Renewal (GEAR) was founded in 1974, and has organized conferences and meetings to provide teaching and fellowship, as well as publishing a thrice-yearly Broadsheet and GEAR monographs. Charismatic Renewal has tended to be experienced by individuals rather than churches, although a few churches have embraced the movement. Plans for regional developments of GEAR were set in motion in 1981 with the establishment of regional organising committees in several of the twelve URC Provinces. Increasing recognition and acceptance of GEAR in the denomination is to be seen in the appointment of 'GEAR people' onto the main committees of the church. Bob Gordon, for example, has been appointed as consultant for evangelism and renewal to two provinces, and it seems that GEAR will continue to play a significant role in the denomination.

The Presbyterian Church of Scotland Panel on Doctrine produced an official report on the Charismatic Movement as early as 1974. According to Tom Smail, it concerned itself primarily with how the Neo-Pentecostal insights were to be understood and integrated in terms of the Reformed tradition rather than with the practical questions of spiritual and church renewal. Stressing that charismatic experience is not to be understood as a second blessing to be received by a few, it also disagreed with the Renewal's use of the term 'baptism in the Spirit', feeling that this cast doubt on the adequacy and sufficiency of one baptism into Christ. The work of the Spirit, it stated, is in and for the whole body, and charismatic worship should neither be forbidden nor encouraged in worship. Charismatic prayer groups meeting with the official approval of the Church are the place where the charismatic gifts will be most usefully exercised. Smail notes that it is not clear how much help to the Church the Panel on

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6. Editorial: "Become Perfectly One". Dunamis No.33. Oct.1980. p.3.

Doctrine thinks the Charismatic Renewal can be, for at some points it is presented as though it were a problem and at others as though it were a promise<sup>7</sup>. Whilst this report seems unfavourable towards the movement if compared with the recent Anglican one, the fact that it was produced in the early seventies does much to explain the caution and reservations expressed. After a slow start in comparison with England, the Charismatic Movement has spread throughout Scotland in several denominations and is now much more firmly established.

The response of independent and denominational evangelicals to the Charismatic Movement has varied. On the one hand many individuals and some churches within evangelicalism have experienced charismatic renewal. On the other, some evangelicals - mainly those in independent churches of a strong Calvinistic line - believe that the charismata ceased once the early church was firmly established, and they consequently hold to the position that the Charismatic Movement cannot be of God. One person noted that the start of the Charismatic Movement was simultaneous with the decision by large numbers of evangelicals to come out of the denominations and start new independent evangelical churches. A significant effect of the Charismatic Movement has been to renew people's loyalty to and appreciation of their denominational church, and he is not alone in feeling that the devil had thereby used the Charismatic Movement to prevent evangelicals coming out of their denominations and making a clear stand for truth at the outset. But in spite of considerable disapproval of the movement in some evangelical churches, many of their members do not believe that the charismata have ceased, and some have personally experienced charismatic renewal "on the quiet".

The difference of opinion over the charismatic issue between evangelical leaders at All Souls, Langham Place, at the beginning of the Charismatic Movement is well-known<sup>8</sup>. Tensions and difficulties between

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7. Tom Smail: "Pentecost among the Presbyterians". Renewal No.52. Aug/Sept. 1974. pp.19-20.

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8. See Michael Harper: None Can Guess. Hodder and Stoughton. 1971. pp.60-63.

charismatics and evangelicals continued, but in 1974 moves were made to form a group of evangelical Anglicans and charismatics who would participate together in theological discussion and try to resolve some of these. The group members were nominated by the Church of England Evangelical Council and the Fountain Trust, and several meetings were held from 1975 to 1977, after which they produced a Joint Statement<sup>9</sup>. The statement described the Charismatic Movement as "both trans-denominational and trans-traditional", embracing a very wide spectrum of views, attitudes and practices, not all originating from a recognised evangelical 'stable', and the statement itself included both agreements and disagreements, not necessarily only between the two groups involved. Then towards the end of 1978 a wider meeting took place, following a suggestion by the Fountain Trust to the British Council of Churches that the time was ripe for a consultation between denominational leaders and those involved in charismatic renewal in the churches. Many denominations and smaller bodies were represented, and there were discussions concerning authority and leadership (perceptively identified as issues which would ultimately make or break the renewal), different attitudes to church structures, and the unifying and divisive results of the Charismatic Movement. It was agreed that the movement had a part to play in the renewal of the Church and that the Churches must 'harness its energies without spoiling its promise'<sup>10</sup>.

The Fountain Trust especially has consistently advised charismatics not to leave the established denominations, and it maintained this line when the house churches started to develop in the early seventies. In a 1974 editorial in Renewal, Michael Harper listed among the important issues facing the Charismatic Movement the growth of the house churches and the divide between 'stay-inners' and 'come-outers'<sup>11</sup>. Harper has never been an

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9. Joint Statement: Church of England Evangelical Council and Fountain Trust. Theological Renewal Occasional Paper. No.1. April/May 1977.

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10. Report: "Fountain Trust and British Council of Churches". Renewal No.79. Feb/Mar. 1979. pp.4-5.

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11. Michael Harper: Editorial ("The whole gospel for the whole of society"). Renewal No.49. Feb/March 1974. pp.26-27.

advocate of 'come-outism', feeling that this leads to further complications where Christian unity is concerned:

"The urgency of what we have to do is accentuated by the apparently inexorable drift away from the organised structured churches, either into independent church structures - which adds immensely to the difficulties of Christian Unity and introduces new divides which were not there before - or into heathenism ... " 12

The house churches have grown at a phenomenal rate, as people have left established denominational churches to join them.

So why do the 'come-outers' come out? Every conceivable denomination and Christian background is represented by people in the house churches, and these people tend to express rejection of the denominational churches and can never envisage returning to them - although some become disillusioned with house churches too and do in fact return to the denominations. Views concerning the denominations vary from the non-condemnatory and tolerant through to being extreme and denouncing. Some house church people accept that at present the greater part of the Body of Christ is within denominational churches, but still feel that there is no hope whatsoever for the denominations. Gerald Coates points out that a denomination is less than the Church universal yet more than a local church, and so a denomination is both more and less than God's design at the same time. Because of the binding nature of denominational structures and systems, there is little openness to change, even when this is inspired by God. A lot of the Charismatic Movement is therefore "rearranging the charismatics on a sinking ship": the singing may get better, but rigid structures and fixed ideas mean that little of value can happen, and things rarely go as far as God intends. Many house church people feel that the denominations are run by ungodly men, and this is a further reason why they have left. Some are of the opinion that a parting of the ways will come about between the denominations and the true church. Some Christians are

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12. Michael Harper: Let My People Grow. Hodder and Stoughton. 1977. pp.165-166.

therefore called to stay in the denominations for the present time, whilst others are called to come out and pioneer something free for the others when they are thrown out by the system or by persecution. The house churches form this latter group of Christians.

Most house church people recognise that many in the denominations have a genuine love for God. Some, however, do have a much harder attitude towards the denominations themselves. One person was adamant that the vision and purpose of God cannot be implemented without the complete breaking-down of structures, and he spoke of a well-known charismatic baptist church in these terms:

"The minister knows it, but hasn't got it going in his church or in his life, and has no intention of letting it work because too much is at stake ... Their brand new building would become redundant. It (the church) is just a happy club at the moment."

This person's appraisal of the Fountain Trust was that it should have finished when Michael Harper left. God had given Harper an unction to found the Trust, and his decision to resign as its director was his personal expression of the fact that God was lifting that unction, and that there should no longer be a Fountain Trust<sup>13</sup>. The same thing happened with the Festival of Light: its director felt guided to leave when the unction was lifted, but other people wanted to keep the organization going. Ninety-nine per cent of the denominations were felt to be in this category. God is constantly moving on, and any denomination is the product of what God has said or done into a particular situation or group of people, which in weeks or months has not moved on into the continuation of what God is doing. The denominations therefore started by moving on with God, but became just as stuck as their predecessors, and because of their tradition they cannot now hear what God is saying. God does not blame people for remaining, for example, as Baptists, because as far as God is concerned, the name is immaterial. The Baptist denomination, however, would not have

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13. This was in fact the conclusion reached by the Trust when it wound up its affairs at the end of 1980.

existed for long had it complied with God's purpose, for it would have moved on and out-dated itself. This understanding of denominationalism sees it as something which should be fluid and constantly changing, and it is the view of many in the House Church Movement.

Of all the denominations and groupings, three stand out from the others in receiving specific criticism from a large number of house church people. Their identities are surprising, as they are the very three which one would at first expect to meet with the most approval - Classical Pentecostalism, Evangelicalism, and the exclusive house churches. These three groups have in fact got more in common with house churches than any others. Classical Pentecostalism, for instance, emphasises baptism in the Spirit and the use of charismatic gifts in church life, and in some Pentecostal denominations the office of apostle functions. Similarly, Evangelicalism is the theological position which the majority of house church people would adhere to. Certainly, the overall theological stance of the house churches is an evangelical one. It is also interesting that people in the more open house churches, such as those of the Fullness circle and the Bradford circle, have such strong reservations about the exclusive house churches. These reservations concern both their theology and their exclusiveness, there being particular concern over the fact that the leaders are answerable only to themselves and are not in a 'covering' relationship with other men in positions of authority. The various fellowships which are grouped together in the 'house church' category are actually very diverse in terms of doctrine and practice. The use of one label to describe them is a convenient way of designating those fellowships which have left established denominations, but misleading if it is assumed that the differences between them are negligible. Classical Pentecostalism, Evangelicalism, and the exclusive house churches are criticised precisely because they have stressed something of paramount importance, yet have still fallen short. In the case of Classical Pentecostalism, it was once so near the mark in that it pioneered something of such importance. However, it has settled down and lost its initial goal which was to bring its emphasis upon the Holy Spirit into the whole church. The active opposition of some of its churches to the Charismatic Movement is also spoken of, and Pentecostalism is felt not only to have failed God but to have impeded His purposes. Criticism of Evangelicalism is directed



at its dogmatism and inflexibility. It is felt that 'doctrine' is a misused word, and that Evangelicalism's use of it illustrates how Man uses words and concepts which God does not. A lot in Evangelicalism is considered to be traditional rather than biblical, and it is very restrictive, although it is not denied by the majority that God is at work in it. The view was also expressed that Evangelicals were "the Pharisees of the nineteen-sixties", and were bitter and twisted, stressing doctrine and law, and imposing rules and regulations on young people which could not be fulfilled. Some parts of Evangelicalism were felt to be Godless and spiritually dead, and one person even referred to Evangelicalism as "Ichabod - the glory has departed". Such an extreme view of the latter is, however, rarely expressed.

The house churches emphasise that God is not renewing the denominations, but individuals, families and communities. Denominational divisions are not God's intention, and geographical considerations are felt to be the only legitimate ones involved in determining which Christians one shares fellowship and worship with. In his analysis of the contemporary situation, John Noble portrays denominations as streams of water which should merge together to form the river, but instead try to be the river by themselves:

"It's no secret that the present move of God across the world is made up of many streams of emphasis ... Tragically, what has happened is that facets of truth have been set up as the whole ... The refreshing little stream, which might have added its force to others in making a great river, forges its own path in an effort to become the river itself." <sup>14</sup>

The Fullness line is that Christians must work for the removal of denominational barriers in order that all believers who acknowledge the Lordship of Christ may gather together irrespective of former denominational allegiance. Graham Perrins writes:

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14. John Noble: "The streams make glad?" Fullness Vol.18. p.12.

"There is biblical authority for the idea of both the local and the universal church, but the idea of a denominational church comes into neither category. Not only is the denominational church unbiblical it is perhaps one of the greatest hindrances to bringing God's people together." <sup>15</sup>

The old must be allowed to die so that the new may emerge. Perrins continues:

"I would rather be part of something which is not yet denominational, than be part of a denominational structure waiting for yet another move of the Spirit to go wrong.

"To equate the church of Jesus Christ with the denominational structure must lead to a further error of judgment, namely, that to leave such a denominational church is to leave Christ's local church, or to become divisive and disloyal. In fact the exact opposite may be the result. Such folk may well be furthering the cause of real unity ...

"Jesus could have tried by a gradual process of change to transform Judaism with all its institutions and Temple worship into the New Testament community of God. In fact he did not. He let it all go down into death. Then he created a new thing. A new generation emerged."

The 'new generation' of today consists of the people who have come out of the denominational churches and come together in the house churches, a non-denominational gathering of Christian believers. This generation will thus pioneer new ground for those that follow. Not all house church people, however, believe that God's guidance to every Christian will be to 'come out'. For the moment at least, some will be led by God to 'stay in'.

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15. Graham Perrins: "Denominations and Divisions". Fullness Vol.7. pp.4-6.

The case in favour of house churches was presented in 1973 by George Tarleton in his booklet The Church In The House<sup>16</sup>. He recognised that such churches often attract the discontented, but urged the reader to consider house churches in a positive light. Pointing out that the Body of Christ is a living organism rather than an organization, he states:

"An organization has form resulting from external laws whereas an organism has form resulting from internal life. Without life an organism ceases to exist, but an organization can exist with or without life! For years I paid lip service to this truth, but went on in practice to deny it. In the five years I served as the minister of a thriving evangelical church I found this principle of being an organism impossible to work out, because of the organization! By contrast, the past two years in a house church have enabled me to live this truth without 'trying'. For the greater fluidity provides the opportunity for more rapid changes."

House churches are thus pioneering their way back to the simplicity of the early church, leaving the existing structures behind. In the nine years since this booklet appeared, a more complex theological basis has emerged as justification for the house churches. This is tied in with eschatological understanding of the purposes of God in bringing His Church to an appropriate state for its concluding witness to the world and the return of Christ.

Although some helpful emphases have emerged from the House Church Movement, a number of critical points can be raised. Simply because the New Testament church found it convenient to meet in private homes, it does not follow that this is the pattern to be followed today, and it is paradoxical that as the house churches have grown, they have had no option but to acquire their own buildings, or - ironically - to use the premises of existing denominational churches. In addition to this, grounds can be argued for claiming that the House Church Movement is effectively a

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16. George Tarleton: The Church In The House. Private publication. 1973.

withdrawal from the problems of the contemporary church, and an abdication of responsibility by the people involved. One fact of life which certain groups in the House Church Movement never seem to have been able to appreciate is that whatever their faults, structures are a necessary part of human life. It is inevitable that as a group develops there will be an increasing necessity for some kind of structure, system or organization to keep it functioning. The paradox of 'come-outism' is succinctly described by David Watson:

" ... that is precisely what some Christians have done throughout the centuries. Impatient with the mixture of impurities in terms of faith, life or doctrine (often minor doctrine of secondary importance), some pull out of existing denominations to form another fellowship of like-minded Christians who, for the time being at least, enjoy greater freedom in worship or flexibility in structure. Soon, however, another denomination is born; and a little later a visible church, with the same impurities as before, will have come into being. Although the distinction between the visible and the invisible church is a valid one, a separation between the two is impossible." <sup>17</sup>

In his recent appraisal of the Charismatic Movement, Michael Harper stated that although those currently free from the restrictions of tradition are the best off at the moment, their problems are yet to come, especially when the next generation of leadership arises in twenty years time<sup>18</sup>. Marked caution is expressed by numerous writers about the formation of new denominations and trans-denominational groupings. It is felt that house churches must inevitably find themselves with the same concerns and complexities as denominational churches, however much they may strive to avoid these. Michael Harper is realistic in his recognition that:

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17. David Watson: I Believe In The Church. Hodder and Stoughton. 1979. p.333.

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18. Michael Harper: Charismatic Crisis. Private publication. 1980. p.16.

"... even if we have gone for a new simple pattern of independency, such as a 'house church', we can't enjoy that luxury for very long before we have to begin thinking hard what our relationship and commitment should be to the rest of the Church. Before we know where we are we can be involved in a new denominational structure based on a new set of agreements. It may at first only look like a fresh alignment, but all too quickly it jells into a federation of churches, and, therefore, a denomination." 19

The Bradford Circle is the house church grouping which is the nearest to becoming a denomination. Indeed, with its highly organised nationwide structure many feel that it has in effect been a denomination for some time. Its relationship with established denominations has certainly not been a trouble-free one from the point of view of any of the parties involved. Some ministers have accused the Bradford Circle of going around looking for break-away house groups to take under its wing, but the leaders have denied this. They state that their church development follows no set pattern, but that any contacts they do have are developed organically through relationships and contacts provided by God.

Relations between established denominations and all house church streams fluctuate. Michael Harper speaks for many when he writes:

"What may seem lively and spiritual today has a fatal tendency to become legalistic and binding in the future. It is most important on both sides of the house church/historic church divide that fellowship and dialogue continues. I have often pleaded with the house churches to 'come clean' and admit that they are a new church or denomination. If they would only accept what all the evidence suggests, it would be easier to fellowship together, for then it would not only be a person-to-person encounter, but also a church-to-church. Their literature and platform has tended more and more in an elitist direction, as if

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19. op.cit.12. p.184.

there is nothing worth reading or hearing apart from that which comes from their own set-up." 20

A very fair and sympathetic assessment of house churches is found in John Gunstone's book A People For His Praise. The author has this to say about the house church/historic church divide:

"Some of the house churches flourishing today have set themselves in open opposition to the established denominations. They claim that the institutional denominations can no longer offer members an authentic Christian fellowship and their message to charismatics and others is, 'Come out from among them'. The exclusiveness of some of these house churches also makes them intolerant of congregations which attempt to be more comprehensive in their membership. Such an attitude is, to say the least, unhelpful and uncharitable, but it should not prevent us from recognising that the house church has a communal strength which contrasts sharply with the communal weakness of many local congregations." 21

In his latest book The Radical Christian, Arthur Wallis challenges people to re-examine their customs and beliefs, and points out that although division may be the work of the devil, it may also be the work of God. He seeks to make a distinction between the disturbing of unity and the disturbing of the status quo:

"... We pay too high a price for unity if it costs us the truth.

"When people leave their churches because they are following convictions which they believe God has given them, let us not be

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20. op.cit.18. p.10.

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21. John Gunstone: A People For His Praise. Hodder and Stoughton. 1978. p.163. See further pp.160-168.

swift to accuse them of being divisive, not at least till we know all the facts. If we do we may be the ones who are grieving the Holy Spirit. There are times when God himself takes the initiative to bring division and disturbance into situations ... There are too many status quos around that need disturbing. Every move of the Holy Spirit is a move of the Holy Disturber."<sup>22</sup> (his italics)

But it is not only the house churches which are accused of divisiveness. Charismatics who stay within their denominations have frequently been said to cause division within churches. David Russell of the Baptist Union stated in Renewal that he had heard the complaint that in some churches the degree of denominational support had seemed to fluctuate in inverse ratio to the degree of involvement with the Charismatic Movement<sup>23</sup>. But conversely it has been argued that if people are directing their attention towards local involvement and commitment, whereas before they were perhaps more occupied with denominational concerns, this is actually a good thing. It is all a question of how much importance one attributes to denominational structures and organizations, and this is of course the very point that the house churches are making.

The Charismatic Movement has had a marked impact upon practical ecumenism. Participants in the movement have found that their common charismatic experience has transcended denominational and ideological divides while it clarifies and authenticates what is authentically Christian in each tradition. Experiential unity has thus by-passed structural and doctrinal changes. Michael Harper expresses the firm belief that the Charismatic Movement is an instrument which can bring about church unity between all denominations, and this is precisely because it diverts

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22. Arthur Wallis: The Radical Christian. Kingsway. 1981. p.131.

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23. David Russell: "Where the shoe pinches". Renewal No.82. Aug/Sept. 1979. p.25.

the emphasis from doctrinal agreement and starts from the basis of a common experience. Approached from this angle, ecumenical progress can be made, and it is possible to explore avenues which under the more standard procedure would soon be blocked by doctrinal problems. The Charismatic Movement already maintains a strong unity between people of very different doctrinal persuasions, and Harper states that it seems logical that the same effect could be sustained throughout the Church as a whole as the movement permeated it. Doctrinally, the Charismatic Movement is diverse:

"The Charismatic Movement is still amorphous, even if recently attempts have been made to structure it more definitely ... Charismatic Christianity has flowed into all sections of the Church and had its influence on Catholics and Liberals alike. It would be impossible for Charismatics to define their doctrines, because of the great variety expressed. What basically united Charismatics is not doctrine but experience." <sup>24</sup> (his italics)

An early reader of Renewal in 1966 was certainly in no doubt about the ultimate divine aim behind the Charismatic Movement:

"There can be no doubt ... that the ultimate purpose of the Holy Spirit's present purpose will have nothing to do with denominational labels. It will result in a charismatic unlabelled Divine Fellowship. There will be a coagulation of historic assemblies by carnal methods, but a binding together of the true people of God by the breath of the Holy Spirit and an unexpected exodus of true Christians from the Roman Catholic Church." <sup>25</sup>

Charismatics trace their experiential unity back to the words of Jesus recorded in John ch.16.v.14. Jesus describes the work of the Holy Spirit

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24. Michael Harper: This Is The Day. Hodder and Stoughton. 1979. p.36.

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25. Letter ("God's ultimate purpose"). Renewal No.6. Dec.1965/Jan.1966. p.19.



as being for His own glorification, and specifically states in His prayer for unity that He gives His glory to His disciples for the express purpose of this unity. To be filled with the Spirit is to receive in a larger measure 'the glory of God' and to manifest that glory. This filling with the Spirit is the primary emphasis of the Charismatic Movement, and those who have experienced this are being joined together in a way that did not previously seem possible, the prayer of Jesus thus finding fulfillment.

Many charismatics feel such a deep desire for unity that they allow this to sweep aside all other considerations. Tom Smail, however, sounds a cautionary note when he comments that unity should not be seen in this light. Instead of ignoring questions of truth that have separated Christians, there can now be a fruitful examination of these so that charismatic unity is grounded not only in love, but in the truth given in the Son:

"We need together to submit ourselves to the given word of God, so that our unity, like our worship, is not an end in itself, but is in Spirit and in truth, in the eventfulness of the Spirit and in the truth incarnate in Christ." <sup>26</sup>

Smail states that the Charismatic Movement has been shown the same vision as that of Peter at Joppa, namely that God is doing the same thing in people previously beyond each other's horizons and that He wishes them to meet and join in fellowship on the basis of the gospel and all the gifts and graces of the Spirit. Official top-level ecumenism has failed to make much progress, but charismatic ecumenism is distinctive in that it does not begin with theology or church order, but with people:

"The Holy Spirit does not start by revealing the ultimate doctrinal system or the perfect blueprint for the government of the Church; he introduces people to people by bringing us all into a new encounter with the living person of the crucified and

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26. T.A. Smail: "In Tune With The Trinity, part 2". Theological Renewal No.5. Feb/Mar.1977. p.7.

risen Lord."

Because of this, there can be a fundamental oneness between people who would question each other's doctrinal positions quite radically and whose church life is in some respect alien to each other's. If the Spirit is the shared centre of faith and love, even if He is understood in some measure differently by different people, there is a hope and openness with which to tackle otherwise daunting problems. Furthermore, because the Holy Spirit unites by introducing people to people, ecumenical activity is immediately within the range of everybody. It should not be assumed that ecumenical activity is at the expense of truth, for it would not be the work of the Holy Spirit if it were:

"Have we really so little confidence in God's presence in our own tradition that we are afraid to expose it to others; are we so convinced that we have a monopoly of truth that we could dare to claim we have nothing to learn from others?"

Smail makes the pertinent suggestion that perhaps the real divides in Christendom today are not between denominations or even between Protestants and Catholics, but between those in every church who believe in a living God, a fully divine, fully human Saviour, and an active Holy Spirit, and those in every church for whom these have become outgrown myth and symbol<sup>27</sup>.

The typical charismatic attitude to ecumenism is one which is essentially optimistic, and emphasises positive aspects. D.W. Allen, for example, makes the following enthusiastic remarks:

"It is splendid that Catholics who take part in the Charismatic Movement seem to me to become more evangelical; personal devotion to Jesus deepens. At the same time I think Evangelicals in the Charismatic Renewal become more catholic, more

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27. T.A. Smail: Editorial ("The more we are together ..."). Renewal No.71. Oct/Nov.1977. pp.2-4.

sacramental, and both Catholics and Evangelicals can experience livelier liturgy and livelier communities. In the Spirit, each can learn from the others." 28

In the face of experiential unity, some charismatics feel that doctrine pales into insignificance, and others find great difficulty in achieving a balance between completely overlooking differences in doctrine on the one hand, and allowing them to disrupt charismatic unity on the other. Harold Parks showed an awareness of the dangers of experiential unity when he wrote:

"This does not mean for a moment that there has been a shift in the requirement of truth; nor does it indicate that we have forgotten that it is of the nature of liturgy to contain and articulate the truth of God. Care in examining joint statements must be as meticulous as ever. Precision in things theological will never become obsolete. Yet God must be allowed to do His own thing too." 29

It is often difficult for the observer to understand the depth of feeling which engenders this unity, and the transformation of people's attitudes to those of different denominations. The Roman Catholic priest Anthony Davies testifies:

"My relationship with Christians of other denominations has changed from ignorance and suspicion to love and trust. Recently I led the service and preached in a United Reformed Church when their minister was away." 30

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28. D.W. Allen: "The Theology of the Spirit and Charismatic Renewal". Theological Renewal No.2. Feb/Mar.1976. p.23.

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29. Harold Parks: "Divine encores". Renewal No.50. April/May 1974. p.28.

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30. Anthony L. Davies in: Anointed With The Spirit". Mayhew-McCrimmon. 1978. p.22.

The most far-reaching effects of charismatic unity are to be seen in Ireland where there are many inter-denominational prayer groups, some of which are located in the areas most affected by violence. The triumph of charismatic unity is vividly described by John Gunstone:

"I attended one of the first charismatic meetings in Belfast shortly after the fresh outbreak of the troubles in the early seventies ... A group of Roman Catholics - Jesuits, nuns, seminarians and lay folk - travelled up from Dublin specially for the occasion. When he gave his testimony, a Jesuit priest confessed that he had never crossed the Border before in his life. He had studied in Rome and visited different parts of the world, but he had been too scared to travel into that part of Ireland that represented Protestant power for him. He admitted that when the train carrying him to Belfast crossed into Northern Ireland that Friday afternoon, a feeling of terror had gripped him. It was not until he was warmly embraced in Belfast station by a group of people whom he had never met before that he realised he was among friends - friends who, during the weekend, he came to recognise as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ." <sup>31</sup>

From the early days of the movement it has been common to find Protestants speaking at Catholic meetings and vice versa, and this has certainly helped each to a more realistic understanding of the other. Sometimes the differences have turned out to be less weighty than imagined, with new light being shed on an aspect which has been ignored or played down by a person's own denomination, and this has encouraged charismatics in their ecumenical activities.

The response of charismatics to official ecumenical discussions by denominational authorities varies. Some feel that these are worthwhile and must ultimately prove fruitful, simply because the Holy Spirit desires to bring about unity. Others feel frustrated by the long-windedness of such discussions and feel that questions of doctrine and practice are too

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31. op.cit.21. p.148.

dominant. Graham Perrins voices the feelings of the majority of house church adherents when he describes any future world church of the Ecumenical Movement as the ultimate form of denominationalism, a parody of the truth and a man-made edition of the real thing<sup>32</sup>. Evangelicals within the denominational Charismatic Movement agree with him and point out that Christian unity must be between committed Christians, and not between Christians and non-Christian church-goers. The true Church is to be distinguished from the organizational Church, even if the former subsists in part in the latter. The evangelical emphasis comes through strongly in the Joint Statement, which recognises two dangers in ecumenism<sup>33</sup>. Firstly, a unity based on experience at the expense of doctrine would be less than the unity envisaged in the New Testament, and would be dangerous in the long-term. And secondly, personal - and even corporate - renewal has not always meant the dropping of all anti-biblical or sub-biblical traditions and practices. Reformation by God's word is necessary alongside renewal by His Spirit in all churches. Many charismatics follow this line and would not wish to see ecclesiastical unity because this would mean a watering down of truth, particularly so with regard to union between Protestant and Catholic churches. Yet Protestants and Catholics are happy to share fellowship on an individual or even a group basis with each other. Opinions on the theory of church unity vary, but one thing is patently obvious: whilst the authorities are talking about it, the charismatics are getting on with it. Grass-roots ecumenism in the Charismatic Movement has leapt ahead of official developments, and Michael Harper describes this as "underground ecumenism", not in the sense that it is hidden or forbidden, but because it is unofficial and spontaneous. He describes this vividly:

"Roman Catholics and Protestants have found each other 'in the Holy Spirit' and 'in Jesus Christ'. They have met each other - not at the point of strength, but that of shared human weakness. They have come together in liturgical freedom and joy. In

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32. op.cit.15.

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33. op.cit.9.

singing together they have melted into a new oneness, which is hard to separate out again. They have found that they have had to share together at the point of ignorance also. They have both come into new freedom in the Holy Spirit and the experience of fresh gifts and ministries at a time when neither the Roman Catholic Church nor the Protestant Churches have known too much about them. They have had, therefore, to learn together what it means to be a charismatic Christian in the twentieth century." 34

Former editor of the Catholic Herald, Gerard Noel, has perceptively observed:

"Truth, for the person of faith, cannot for ever be something imposed from outside. It can flower only from within." 35

This is true of the unity experienced by those who share charismatic renewal. The situation is most accurately summarised by Peter Hocken in New Heaven? New Earth? when he writes:

"The Pentecostal movement offers a different model for ecumenical progress from that generally prevailing in the ecumenical movement, particularly as to the role of theology. Instead of theologians and church leaders communicating their ecumenical theology to the rest (a method almost certain to produce a grass-roots back-lash), the Pentecostal movement does not arise from re-thinking but springs from personal spiritual renewal and sharing in worship and ministry. Such a movement responds not simply to intellectual needs and to crises in theology, but speaks to the anguish of human hearts and meets deeper needs of the human spirit." 36

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34. op.cit.24. p.110.

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35. Gerard Noel: The Anatomy of the Catholic Church. Hodder and Stoughton. 1980. p.276.

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36. Peter Hocken: New Heaven? New Earth?. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1976. p.52.

However, in placing such emphasis upon experience in ecumenism, the movement is treading a dangerous path. The experience and theology that is held in common is allowed to over-ride that which is not, and important questions are rarely dealt with but are allowed instead to pale into insignificance. There is undoubtedly a fear of disrupting the unity that has been achieved, and so strong is the emotional depth of this unity that the determination to preserve it is strong. But to call charismatic togetherness "unity" is surely to misunderstand the meaning of the word. Unity must involve more than feeling, however deep this feeling may be. It must embrace also an intellectual agreement, thus constituting oneness on both levels. In the first sense, the Charismatic Movement has attained a unity, but in the other - that of intellectual oneness - it is lacking. Nevertheless, the climate of fellowship and trust which it has created provides an atmosphere in which questions of theology and doctrine can be discussed in a loving and open way, if the opportunity be taken.

The major question in ecumenical debate has been that of unity between the Catholic and Protestant churches, and this has been true also in the Charismatic Movement. Fellowship between Protestants of different denominations is not over-problematical, simply because division is mainly over secondary issues and there is a basic agreement on the primary ones. The reader of the letter already quoted in this chapter is typical of many Protestants in the Charismatic Movement in expecting Catholic charismatics to leave the Roman Catholic Church. Concern over the Catholic Charismatic issue is reflected in Renewal editorials, particularly during 1973 and 1974: Michael Harper notes that the major trend in the Charismatic Movement since 1971 has been the Catholic involvement and he recognises the disquiet felt by many Protestant charismatics concerning this<sup>37</sup>. He acknowledges that Catholic charismatics have contributed much scholarship, order and inspiration to the Charismatic Movement, and encourages them to become less Catholic orientated and more ecumenical<sup>38</sup>. But in June 1974,

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37. Michael Harper: editorial ("From Guildford to Nottingham"). Renewal No.45. June/July 1973. p.2.

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38. Michael Harper: editorial ("Discernment, direction and harmony"). Renewal No.51. June/July 1974. pp.2-4.

he feels that the time has come to ask some important questions of Catholic charismatics, without in any way calling into question the movement itself. Whilst some have hailed the Catholic Charismatic Movement as the miracle of the century and others have denounced it as a counterfeit of the devil, Harper points out that Renewal has been "friendly and open-minded", at times defending it from its more fervent critics. Personally, he does not doubt at all that the Catholic Charismatic Movement is a genuine and important work of the Holy Spirit, and he offers what follows as constructive concern. Firstly, he doubts how fully the Holy Spirit is in control of the movement if Catholic charismatics have not been shown anything by the Holy Spirit which is at variance with the infallibly defined teaching of the Catholic Church, for example the infallibility of the Pope. Harper observes it to be increasingly the case that charismatic Catholics are most eager to prove that the Charismatic Movement endorses Catholic doctrine at every point, and to bend over backwards to please their superiors from the Pope downwards. Does the Holy Spirit really wish them to conform their theology to Catholic traditions? Sceptical Protestants have always asked what happens to Catholic doctrine after Catholics are baptised in the Spirit:

"Some of us have urged such sceptics to be patient and wait ...  
But now seven years have passed and one begins to wonder how much longer we have to wait."

There was no indication that Catholic charismatics were changing their doctrines, only re-emphasising some and relegating others to the sidelines. Harper wonders whether the hierarchy and bishops would be so supportive of the movement if things were otherwise. He raises other important issues which although not matters of doctrine as such, are nevertheless authoritative church policy - inter-communion (which remains banned), birth control (which assumes the papal authority's right to govern the private lives of the church's members), and Vatican politics. Whilst not advocating outright defiance and disobedience to their church, he believes that the Catholic Charismatic Movement is now numerically strong enough to be listened to and so should not remain silent on such issues. The Holy Spirit is not here to give a measure of spiritual uplift, but to lead into all truth, which must inevitably mean the exposure and correction of error.



Harper states that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal has maybe become too respectable too quickly, and he says to Catholic charismatics:

"Stay where you are, but stop apologizing for being revolutionaries, and don't be surprised when you are persecuted for it by your own people." <sup>39</sup>

This editorial provoked reaction at both ends of the pole. Some readers were very much relieved that at last some doctrinal and ethical questions were being asked of Catholics, whilst others were dismayed that such questions should have been asked in the first place and express concern over the effect this might have on unity between Protestant and Catholic charismatics<sup>40</sup>. Following on from this, Harper suggests further that the Catholic Charismatic Movement supply "stronger teeth" to the progressive leaders within Catholicism, anchoring their cause more firmly in Scripture, and securing more popular grass-roots opinion for their cause. In addition to this, it should seek to undermine conservative complacency and force that element to face the facts of twentieth century life<sup>41</sup>. In 1975, Harper sees the endorsement of the Charismatic Renewal by Cardinal Suenens and Pope Paul as an encouragement to everyone who looks to the Holy Spirit to bring renewal to all the churches. Although solving few ecumenical or doctrinal problems, it increased ecumenical hope, and Harper disagrees with those who see Papal endorsement as a further sinister step towards the taming and institutionalizing of the renewal, or who regard it as the final and clearest indication that the renewal is counterfeit. He goes on to state that Protestant charismatics can learn from Catholic charismatics in

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39. Michael Harper: editorial ("Too respectable, too quickly?"). Renewal No.51. June/July 1974. pp.2-4.

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40. Letter: ("Unity of love"). Renewal No.56. April/May 1975. p.7.

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41. Michael Harper: editorial ("Catholic charismatics"). Renewal No.57. June/July 1975. pp.2-3.

a number of areas: dedication and effectiveness of leadership; the clear sense of call to share the Charismatic Renewal with the whole Church; the stress on obedience to superiors, submission to one another, and self-discipline of life and work; keen involvement of leaders; and attention to theology and doctrine<sup>42</sup>. Nevertheless, he clearly feels a degree of expectation that charismatic Catholics will modify some of their beliefs and practices, even if they do not leave the Church.

However, by 1979, and events having proved otherwise, Harper has come to terms with the fact that charismatics are remaining within the Catholic church, and the reality of the Holy Spirit's continued work amongst them under these circumstances has convinced him that they have divine authentication of this. In reply to Protestant claims that Catholic charismatics should distance themselves from Catholicism because of its heresy, he states:

"If this be so, the Holy Spirit seems to have shown himself to be singularly undiplomatic."<sup>43</sup>

Yet in 1980 there comes further cautionary comment concerning the dangers to the Catholic Renewal of attempting to please church leaders:

"His (the Pope's) more recent statements on the relationship between priest and laity, which seem to be backward looking and inconsistent with what the Holy Spirit seems to be saying in the Renewal have not received the kind of comments which would seem appropriate."<sup>44</sup>

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42. Michael Harper: editorial ("We can learn from Catholics"). Renewal No.58. Aug/Sept. 1975. pp.2-3.

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43. op.cit.24. p.38.

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44. op.cit.18. p.9.

Harper's thought on the subject is typical of Protestant charismatics, consisting as it does of two conflicting desires. The first of these is to see a development of the unity that is already in evidence, the second to see the correction of what they believe to be error in Catholic theology and doctrine. There is an inherent difficulty in holding the two together, and consequently one finds a continuous vacillation between them, as first one is emphasised and then the other. Whilst many feel that they have cleared up previous misconceptions and misunderstandings concerning Catholicism, this still leaves a certain strain in the area of ecumenical relations between themselves and Catholics.

From the Catholic point of view, there is a similar recognition of the contribution that the Charismatic Movement can make to ecumenism. Heribert Muhlen has ventured to suggest that the movement justifies the hope that a tradition and spirituality common to the currently separated churches will be possible in the foreseeable future<sup>45</sup>. The Charismatic Renewal has brought a much-needed practical boost to an ecumenism which was losing its impetus and producing few tangible results. But if Protestants were hoping that Catholic charismatics would come round to their way of thinking with regard to theology and doctrine, they will be disappointed. Catholic charismatics hold fervently to their traditions and theology, frequently coming to a fresh appreciation of them, and thus remaining unashamedly Catholic. Most Catholic charismatics are eager to welcome Protestants to their meetings, but they are not embarrassed about the promulgation of specifically Catholic teaching, feeling that the inclusion of this is a good thing to maintain. Following the implication of conciliar theology when it stated that Christ's reality 'subsists' in the Catholic church, they do not believe that non-Catholic Christians are automatically separated from Christ. Although not alienated from truth, the latter are, however, separated from its fullness, and Catholic charismatics do not see Protestant-Catholic unity as a matter of a Protestant surrender, but in terms of a clearer perception by Protestants of the whole truth. This is in keeping with the general Catholic position. Catholic charismatics are certainly more realistic than their Protestant counterparts in their frank

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45. Heribert Muhlen: A Charismatic Theology. Burns and Oates. 1978. p.17.

recognition of the differences that do exist. An example of this is to be found in the preface to Muhlen's Charismatic Theology, where it is stated:

"In order to deal with this present-day situation - and not to act as if all theological questions were solved - Protestant colleagues have supplemented at some points, from a Protestant standpoint and for Protestant readers, the lectures and suggestions for prayer produced by Heribert Muhlen. This seems to us a more appropriate procedure than any attempt at a wholly uniform text ..."<sup>46</sup>

This provides a marked contrast to Protestant vacillation between maintaining that a shared experience has made theological differences comparatively unimportant - accompanied by an embarrassed vagueness if such are mentioned - and the counter-claim that these differences still constitute a barrier to true unity. The major Catholic contribution in the sphere of ecumenism has been in the form of the second Malines Document, Ecumenism and Charismatic Renewal: Theological and Pastoral Orientations<sup>47</sup>, written by Cardinal Suenens. This book encourages ecumenical concern, and treats the whole subject in a positive as opposed to a negative manner. Suenens has the foresight to recognise that excesses and shortcuts which may appear to be ecumenical might in fact bring about weakness and fragmentation. An ecumenical euphoria should not therefore be allowed to over-ride the necessity for theological understanding and agreement. Suenens provides specific guidelines for Catholics involved in ecumenical activity, urging them to maintain a clear and unembarrassed position on matters such as the observance and celebration of liturgical times and feasts, their relation to Mary and the saints, and the mentioning in prayer of the Pope, the bishops, and other specific Catholic intentions. His advice concerning the need for ecumenical sensitivity in teaching is

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46. op.cit.45. pp.7-8.

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47. Cardinal Suenens: Ecumenism and Charismatic Renewal: Theological and Pastoral Orientations. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1978.

both realistic and ecumenically constructive:

"Teaching given within the group should only present views which do not contradict doctrines of any of the traditions represented there. Sometimes it will be necessary to advert to the fact that an area has been overlooked, in order to avoid the impression that it is being ruled out or considered unimportant."<sup>48</sup> (my italics)

This is a more honest and helpful approach than one in which differences are ignored or presented as being negligible, and is representative of the Catholic Movement.

A particular problem for participants in the Charismatic Movement has been that of eucharistic separation. Once again, the real differences are between Catholics and Protestants, and the growing trend has been to ignore official advice and warnings from their churches, taking Communion together in the belief that this is right in God's sight. It is the Catholics who have been most outspoken against this practice, rightly pointing out that eucharistic sharing is a sign of being in full communion with each other, and that it cannot take place if this is not so. Intercommunion is the expression of a total unity that has been achieved and it cannot be used as a means of establishing that unity, for it would be contradictory and counter-productive to try and express what is not there because of continuing doctrinal differences. However, Catholics accept that very occasionally a person who is unable to participate in the eucharist with those of his own church may take part in the communion service of the other. Official approval is desirable in such a situation. Heribert Muhlen has stated that the deliberate enduring of eucharistic separation is a spiritual contribution to the hoped-for unity, and he questions the point of some individuals "leaping over the wall" if all the others remain separated<sup>49</sup>. This is a pertinent point, and the Catholics have adopted a

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48. op.cit.47. pp.78, 82.

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49. op.cit.45. pp.18-19.

position which brings clarity to a much confused area. But inter-communion of an 'underground' nature will doubtless continue, whereas a cessation would narrow the growing divide between grass-roots and officialdom, a divide which can ultimately only bring confusion to the sphere of ecumenism.

However, it would be wrong to give the impression that the Charismatic Movement has failed to consider the practicalities involved in working out a Christian unity. This is in fact the theme of Michael Harper's book This Is The Day, in which he concentrates upon unity between the three streams represented respectively by Roman Catholicism, Pentecostalism, and Evangelicalism. Each of these streams has its own distinctive contribution to make to a future unified church: Evangelicalism teaches the gospel and emphasises personal commitment to Christ; Pentecostalism stresses experience of the spiritual dynamic of the Holy Spirit and His activity in church and world; and Catholicism points to the more corporate dimensions of Christian life and the balance of the spiritual with the human aspects of Christian truth. If these three were brought together, says Harper, an ideal balance would be achieved. The Charismatic Movement is more ecumenical than Evangelicalism, the latter:

"... defining its frontiers more definitely and guarding them more jealously."

Harper claims that the Charismatic Movement is also more closely in touch with the 'grass-roots' than is Evangelicalism, and that it encompasses a wider social range. Although numerically smaller than Evangelicalism and less strong in its influence, it covers a much wider cross-section of the Church and thus has a unique function as a "bridge-builder". Furthermore, its bridge-building potential is enhanced by the fact that it has penetrated the Roman Catholic and Protestant worlds to about the same extent. Harper is convinced that a growing unity between the three forces in the Christian world of Roman Catholicism, Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism is both desirable and possible:

"The Holy Spirit is so obviously at work in all three worlds that only good can come from an increasing unity which need not be

thought to compromise the essential convictions of those involved. We need to recognise that there is always a danger of a false and superficial unity which can be a betrayal of truth for the sake of expediency. But this must always be weighed against the opposite danger, the weakness that prevails when Christians are not together, and the besmirching of the name of Jesus Christ which our divisions inevitably incite."

This is all very well, but what goes under the label of contemporary Christianity is much too diverse to be contained within these three groupings. Harper states somewhat vaguely that the coming together which he proposes needs to be open to these other elements, but there is no attempt to deal with the actual practicalities involved<sup>50</sup>. In general, This Is The Day provides plenty of theory, some parts of which are more plausibly expostulated than others, but insufficient consideration firstly of basic practicalities and complexities, and secondly of doctrinal and theological differences. One can understand why details such as these seem irksome and to some extent irrelevant to people who have experienced unity through the Charismatic Movement. However, to the wider Christian world they are central.

There has recently been some confusion and discouragement in the Charismatic Movement with regard to ecumenism. The failure of the Anglican-Methodist scheme of reunion, and the mixed reaction from both sides to the recent joint report on the possibility of union between Anglicans and Catholics has led many to wonder if more positive direction is needed. Nineteen-eighty was the date set in 1964 by the British Council of Churches for the unauagation of union, and it passed by with little visible achievement other than the coming together of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches in the United Reformed Church. John Gunstone sought to provide much-needed encouragement in a 1980 issue of Renewal<sup>51</sup>,

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50. op.cit.24. pp.36-49.

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51. John Gunstone: "What was Nineteen-Eighty for?" Renewal No.90. Dec.1980/Jan.1981. pp.22-24.

and pointed to the practical advances made by participants in the Charismatic Movement. Charismatics continue to maintain that the movement's ecumenical activity does not cloud doctrinal issues but rather raises new questions and makes theological reassessment unavoidable, which is a good thing. They also point out that it is untrue that all movements are inherently schismatic, and that on the contrary they can contribute most positively to the well-being of the Church. This, they believe, is what the Charismatic Movement is doing.

Although the Charismatic Movement has broken down many barriers by its effective 'grass-roots' ecumenism, it has also seen division within its own ranks, particularly between the 'come-outers' and 'stay-inners', and there seems little hope of this specific division being broken down. As has been noted several times, it has been solidified by the development of divergent theologies, and the differences between the two groups are by now considerable. Saddened by divisions both within and outside the Charismatic Movement, Michael Harper feels that true ecumenism has not been fully experienced and is yet to come:

"It is very important for us to grasp that what charismatics were experiencing in terms of Christian unity was not true ecumenism but a new form of inter-denominationalism such as has been a prominent feature of Evangelicalism for more than a century. Whilst it is good in itself ... it is not true ecumenism, which instead seeks to engage whole churches in co-operation and unity." 52

Until the whole Church is renewed, true ecumenism must remain somewhere in the future.

In some spheres there has been in the past couple of years a development in the concept of unity which goes beyond the euphoric charismatic unity of earlier years. It is being recognised increasingly that there must be a unity between those who maintain the truth of the

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52. op.cit.18. p.4.



fundamentals of Christianity so that a firm stand may be made against the error of the modern sects and of liberalism. The house churches have been largely responsible for this emphasis coming to the fore, and as their influence increases, so too, presumably, will this. Michael Harper has detected this trend in his appraisal of charismatic renewal:

"... there is an important new ground-swell which needs to be recognised; it is the unity of all those who have belief in the fundamentals of the faith, which would include, the givenness of Christian revelation and the authority of the canonical scriptures; the Virgin Birth and the deity of Christ; justification by faith and the atonement of sin by Christ to name perhaps the most important. The liberal assault on the churches has been undermining the historic faith for a very long time, but it has been greatly intensified in the last fifty years or so and many are succumbing to doubts about the fundamentals." <sup>53</sup>

Catholic and Protestant charismatics alike have always firmly maintained that any envisaged unity cannot and must not extend to any of the modern sects, and as the movement shows some signs of swinging towards a clearer Evangelical position, this stance should be maintained.

Meanwhile, whilst ecumenical aspects of the movement are not necessarily diminishing, there has been in some areas a shift in perspective. A growing acceptance of existent divisions has resulted not in a sense of resignation, but in a 'natural' ecumenism which enjoys relations with those of other denominational allegiance as a matter of course when the opportunity arises, but which concentrates energy upon evangelism and Christian witness in daily life. The phenomenal development of Christian communities, many of them ecumenical, goes hand in hand with this, allowing the fusion of ecumenism with day-to-day Christian commitment and the expression of the faith to people around.

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53. op.cit.18. p.14.

The earlier days of the Charismatic Movement were characterised by an anxious sensitivity concerning differences between Christians, and the tendency was to gloss over dissimilarities for fear of injuring newly established relationships. But it has been increasingly stated that ecumenical matters should not be allowed to obliterate other considerations, and charismatics are now more ready to declare their beliefs openly to fellow-charismatics of other persuasions. Another fact which is being more openly acknowledged is that all the churches need to reform, that no particular one of them is perfect or has a monopoly of truth. This is generally recognised more by Protestants than by Catholics.

Many will find these developments a cause for encouragement, and feel that the Charismatic Movement is reassessing its priorities in the sphere of ecumenism. Whilst there is a growing like-mindedness in some areas amongst participants, however, two distinct viewpoints about the nature of a future unity have also developed. Those still within the established churches expect a unity which will result from the reformation and consequent convergences of all their respective denominations. Participants in the house churches, however, expect this unity to be the outcome of the emergence of one body of true believers in Christ, a leaving behind of the denominations rather than their transformation. The house churches hope that those still in the denominations will come round to their way of thinking. They are not alone in contemporary Britain in anticipating an approaching persecution of the Church, during which the distinction between genuine believers and those who do not have a genuine Christian commitment will become apparent. The true believers will be forced out of the established churches, and will then be able to join the 'one body' prepared by the house churches. This visible convergence of the true Body of Christ will constitute ecumenism in its true sense. Once again, time will tell which expectation becomes reality.

Chapter 15.ORTHODOXY AND HERESY

Debate concerning this topic has taken place in the Christian Church from its very earliest days. The creeds produced by the Councils of Nicea (325). and Chalcedon (451) set out the primary doctrines of Christianity as the Council members interpreted them from the canon of Scripture, and these creeds function - in theory at least - as the test of orthodoxy in Protestantism. Roman Catholicism has continued to develop dogma up to the present day, the most controversial to the Protestant mind being the Immaculate Conception (1854), the doctrine of Papal Infallibility (1870), and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary (1950). In this chapter, orthodoxy is understood to mean doctrine which is in clear accordance with Scripture, as defined at Chalcedon and Nicea, and heresy as doctrine which constitutes deviation or addition to Scripture. Heresy is not always the result of flagrant attempts to distort or modify Christian doctrine. It often begins as an attempt to correct an imbalance, which in its turn becomes sufficiently imbalanced to constitute a deviation from the standard doctrine. Sometimes this deviation may be by implication only, and it is in such instances that there is perhaps the greatest danger of well-intentioned people being led astray into more serious error. The emergence of heresy is an ever-present possibility in the development of any movement which seeks to restore a specific emphasis or explore new areas, and this is particularly so in movements of a characteristically experiential or enthusiastic nature, where doctrine sometimes develops as an afterthought and is moulded by the experience.

The Charismatic Movement is rooted in historical orthodoxy, and grew out of mainline Protestantism and Catholicism. In its Protestant form it has shown a noticeable evangelical leaning with a prominent place attributed to Scripture, and in the Catholic movement too there has been renewed emphasis upon the authority of the Bible, although this is held in conjunction with the authority of the hierarchy and of church tradition. But in spite of this basis, the strong experiential thrust of the Charismatic Movement has resulted in a less rigidly applied understanding of truth, and in a few cases there has been a rather flippant attitude to

the importance of orthodoxy, and even a complete dismissal of it as irrelevant or counter-productive. The words of Michael Harper may be noted here:

"The Charismatic Renewal does not have a particularly good track record when it comes to concern for the truth. I am chiefly here referring to the truth of Christianity. Because of its emphasis on 'testimony' at least in its formative years, it has tended to softpedal, even to ignore truth, largely out of fear that it will divide Christians rather than unite them. Many Christians have in the past been caught up in sectarian battles over words and doctrines, and it has been refreshing to de-fuse much of that animosity and side-track many of the big issues which previously divided Christians, and to find a new unity in one's experience of the Holy Spirit.

"But such a unity is bound to last only so long as one can survive on 'testimony theology', and that is not for long ... there are vital issues lying just beneath the surface which desperately need to be examined and tested." <sup>1</sup>

A concern for truth in doctrine has been most evident in the Anglican, Methodist, and Fountain Trust periodicals, which have all contained a constant measuring of what is said, taught and written against the content of Scripture. This is accompanied by a realization of the necessity of guarding against error, and of the responsibility that lies with the leadership with regard to this. In his last editorial of Renewal, Tom Smail gave voice to his belief that an ongoing renewal will have at its centre a concern for truth and a call to obedience<sup>2</sup>. But it is not just the leadership which is concerned with the maintenance of orthodoxy. The readers' letters pages of Renewal reflect continuous concern over matters

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1. Michael Harper: Charismatic Crisis. Private publication. 1980. p.14.

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2. T.A. Smail: Editorial ("Convictions"). Renewal No.82. Aug/Sept. 1979. p.4.

of doctrine and the detection of heresy. To give just one example, a letter on behalf of the Christian Affirmation Campaign, an inter-denominational group of Christians concerned to "expose and counter what they see as the current subversion of the gospel", criticises the World Council of Churches for its concern with political revolution rather than the renewal of Christian religion. The "fateful detente between the WCC and Marxist ideas" is described as insidious and "the most dangerous apostasy in Christian history"<sup>3</sup>.

A particular instance to note which involves theological perception is the concern expressed by Renewal readers over the implications of the teaching of Merlin Carothers in his book Prison To Praise<sup>4</sup>. Although this book received a very favourable review in the magazine<sup>5</sup>, readers questioned certain aspects of it. One person was particularly disturbed by the treatment of Calvary, and the teaching that the events of Calvary in addition to the results should be a cause of joyful laughter:

"To suggest that they are a subject of laughter seems to border on blasphemy."

He feels that an application of Carothers' teaching to the pastoral ministry may lead to horrifying and contradictory results, and he asks whether Job was not justified more than his friends for expressing his real feelings as well as acknowledging God's Lordship, in the face of their blind dogmas. Moreover, he questions the scriptural basis claimed by Carothers for the practice of praise for everything, including evil:

"It is surely not the teaching of scripture, however, that we are

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3. Letter: "David du Plessis and the WCC". Renewal No.62. April/May 1976. p.7.

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4. Merlin Carothers: Prison To Praise. Hodder and Stoughton. 1972.

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5. I. McCulloch: review. Renewal No.40. Aug/Sept. 1972. p.16.

bound to praise the Lord for things that happen clearly contrary to His revealed will, even though when they do happen we can of course praise Him that He is still in control ... To interpret it (Eph.ch.5.v.20) as meaning that we are to praise Him for evil is simply to make the Bible contradict its own teaching, and Christian theology appear quite inconsistent."

This person goes on to caution people against reading books relating only to experiences, and he recommends the studying of the Bible and of books which expound Christian doctrine so that the individual is able to assess the truth or otherwise of the experiences related in writings such as this book<sup>6</sup>. Another reader discerns that Carothers confuses praising God in every situation with praising God for everything, including evil, correctly stating that whilst the first is biblical (Rom.ch.5.v.3; 1 Thess.ch.5.vv.16-18), the second is not. Praising God for evil, he writes, implies that he actually sends evil for one's good. Although Carothers does not take this to its logical conclusions, if one does so it leads to a view of God which is basically pagan and not Christian. This can be shown by three points, the first of which is that the God who deliberately sends evil is not the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ (Jam.ch.1.vv.13,14,16,17). Secondly, it undermines the whole of Christian ethics, for if God sends evil to produce good, and Christians are able to be like Him, then why should Christians not 'do evil that good may come' (Rom.ch.3.v.8)? Then thirdly, it leads to an unchristian, fatalistic outlook on life, for to resist evil might mean a resistance to the God who sent it. Jesus did not praise His Father for evil, but always opposed it, whilst still submitting to His Father's will. This astute reader concludes by stating that one needs to be clear whom one is praising and for what<sup>7</sup>.

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6. letter ("Prison To Praise: A question of unreality"). Renewal No.43. Feb/March 1973. pp.9-10.

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7. Letter ("Question of Praise"). Renewal No.59. Oct/Nov. 1975. p.12.

The above clearly illustrates the inaccuracy of the common sweeping statement that all participants in the Charismatic Movement are theologically naive people, who uncritically follow the teaching of the movement's leaders. In fact there is a considerable amount of theological skill and awareness amongst 'grass-roots' participants, and they do not hesitate to raise points which they feel are in need of clarification or to correct well-intentioned but unscriptural teaching. A marked degree of theological perception is often evident in such people, coupled with this primary concern to maintain orthodoxy. Modern sects such as Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Unification Church, are all firmly and irrevocably repudiated as heretical, and the dangers of involvement are noted, particularly in the case of the latter. In addition to this, 'charismatic movements' which have preceded the contemporary one are by no means always viewed uncritically or staunchly defended. The second century movement of Montanism and the nineteenth century Catholic Apostolic Church of the Irvingites are treated favourably by some charismatics, but receive particular criticism from others on the grounds of serious imbalance and heretical doctrine. The concern for orthodoxy in this instance is thus placed prior to any desire to legitimize past or present charismatic movements.

Coexistent with this approach to orthodoxy, however, is another one. It is to be found amongst people whose foremost desire is to avoid dogmatism and an unloving and condemnatory attitude towards others who may genuinely be seeking God's will. This often over-rides concern to maintain orthodoxy. Rather than feeling that correct doctrine is of primary importance and that the practical outworking of the Christian faith will follow on from this basis, these people believe that when a person is consciously living his life under the Lordship of Christ, then correct doctrine and theology will develop naturally. They thus approach the question of orthodoxy in a different way, and this is reflected by the manner in which they would cope with a heretical person. Such an individual would be offered friendship, love and care, but would not be allowed to minister because their influence would be unhelpful. Often, however, it seems that no specific steps would be taken to correct such a person: rather by being accepted into the fellowship and exposed to its teaching in this way, it is expected that they would recognise the error in

their theology and become orthodox. The issue of orthodoxy is thereby approached from a different angle, and this is particularly to be found in the Fullness circle, and to a lesser degree in some areas of the denominational Charismatic Movement. It is stressed that friendship with all people is a necessity, and that in their rejection of others and their fear of contamination, Christians fail to follow the example of Jesus. It must be emphasised that this easy-going attitude to orthodoxy and heresy is an answer to the practicalities of dealing with the problem, and not to the theory of orthodoxy and heresy in itself. One would, however, be justified in wondering whether such an approach recognises the importance of this issue. The question whether Catholic charismatics should remain in the Catholic Church is considered a vital issue by many in the Charismatic Movement, but this rather light-hearted comment from one person who adopts the approach described above is in marked contrast:

"I wouldn't have that as the ideal, but there we are!"

Whilst this might seem an effective way of dealing with a somewhat controversial situation, the implications that arise from it are more far-reaching and are crystallized in the following statement:

"If they are sincere in God, what more right have I to say that I have the truth than they do?"

The result of this line of thought is that truth is no longer absolute. Its objective nature is lost, it becomes subjective, and the existence of many different truths is allowed for. Truth becomes an essentially personalised thing, and objective verification recedes into the background. Furthermore, it goes hand in hand with the idea that tolerance is incompatible with the maintenance of firm views. It is no longer respectable to stress the importance of maintaining a certain position, and in ecumenical endeavours there is often a flexibility and inprecision which allows for a wide range of views. This trend is evident in the Charismatic Movement, and in some parts of it, it threatens to compromise orthodoxy.



Aside from the general position of the movement described above, particular areas of doctrine need consideration. A number of criticisms have been made by observers with regard to the orthodoxy of the Charismatic Movement, one of which is the accusation that it is in effect a 'Jesus plus' movement, which urges participants to seek after experiences of the Spirit that lead the believer beyond Christ. In some instances this accusation has been justified. Such has been the excitement over experience of the Spirit that the centrality of Jesus has indeed receded into the background, and non-Christians have even been encouraged to seek baptism in the Spirit without a prior understanding of the Christian gospel and a serious commitment to Christ. But this has happened in only a small number of cases, mostly on the fringes of the Charismatic Movement. The vast majority of participants understand their experiences of the Holy Spirit in Christ-centred terms, noting that Christ is the one who sends the Spirit and that the purpose of the latter is to glorify Christ and draw attention to Him. Far from taking one beyond Christ, charismatic experience therefore takes one deeper into Him.

Problems arising from the doctrine of the Trinity have dogged the Church throughout its history. The task of maintaining the delicate balance between the fusion and the distinction of the three persons has not been devoid of difficulties. A detailed article in Renewal by Ken McDougall considers the trinitarian heresies which the Church has had to contend with since its earliest days, and stresses the need to maintain a balance between tritheism and modalism (or Sabellianism):

"In practice the difficulty is to tread along that knife-edge between two popular and obdurate heresies, one of which destroys the unity of the Godhead and the other which obliterates the reality of the three persons."

The 'Jesus only' or 'oneness' doctrine which has characterised some Classical Pentecostal and charismatic groups is actually the substance of the old Modalist heresy, and McDougall recognises that there is certainly an attractive simplicity about this view of Jesus as representing that mode of being which God assumed for one particular time and purpose. However, he correctly notes that as in the case of a great deal of heresy, it is by

following through the implications of the teaching that the dangers become apparent. 'Jesus only' teaching results in the crucifying of the Father and the driving out of the Holy Spirit, and is, says McDougall, finally destructive of everything that is precious in the Christian faith. He feels that the unyielding persistence of this and like heresy in Christian circles can be largely explained by the proud and frail desire of the human mind to have everything 'explained'. God too is expected to fit into this category. But the rejection of what cannot be adequately explained in the interests of a false simplicity is an error which results in serious impoverishment of the faith, and McDougall emphasises the need to maintain the delicate but necessary tension in biblical thought between that which can be known of God and that which cannot be comprehended. Whereas the facts can be known because God has revealed them, the mystery cannot be known because God has not revealed it. In the matter of the Trinity, its mystery has not been revealed, and it is the fact of the Trinity as opposed to the manner of it that is presented to faith. It is foolish to reject the fact because the manner is not understood. McDougall goes on to show how on the basis of Mt.ch.11.v.25, ch.28.v.19, and Jn.ch.14.v.26, the 'Jesus only' teaching is contrary to the clear teaching of the Bible. The denial of trinitarian baptism and the practice of rebaptizing in the name of Jesus only which is found amongst its exponents is not only a clear departure from the New Testament and the command of Jesus to His Church (Rom.ch.6.v.4; 2 Cor.ch.5.v.19; Acts ch.2.v.38; Col.ch.1.v.16; Eph.ch.2.v.18; Heb.ch.9.v.14), but is also contrary to the testimony of genuine Christian experience<sup>8</sup>. The 'Jesus only' teaching, however, is to be found primarily in Classical Pentecostalism rather than in the Charismatic Movement. If trinitarian imbalance has been evident in the latter, it is in the form of emphasis upon the Son and the Spirit with insufficient attention to the Father. This characteristic has been noted by Tom Smail, and in his book The Forgotten Father<sup>9</sup> he seeks to correct

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8. K. McDougall: "On thinking rightly of God". Renewal No.28. Aug/Sept. 1970. pp.4-7.

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9. Tom Smail: The Forgotten Father. Hodder and Stoughton. 1980.

this deficiency. Analysing the current condition of the Charismatic Movement, he writes:

"If I were to diagnose and prescribe for its present ills in a single sentence, I would say that it needs to know the Father. If the medical metaphor suggests a patient in need of healing I would not quarrel with the implication, for that is precisely how I see the present state of the renewal in that part of it I know best, among the Anglican and Protestant churches in Britain. I suspect that the situation in the new independent churches that have sprung from the renewal, in the American denominations, and in the larger but closely related Roman Catholic renewal is not at bottom very different." <sup>10</sup>

Writing in 1980, Smail feels that the movement is in need of the correction and direction that would be provided by a concentration on those aspects of the Christian message that gather round the person, nature and work of God the Father. Its self-concern with spiritual, emotional and physical needs requires re-direction to a new obedience to the universal purpose and will of the Father, which will recall the movement from peripheral matters to what is central. Although God the Father has been regularly and ritually confessed, this belies the fact that in reality His being and work have been out of the centre of concern. Smail believes it significant that this lack of emphasis upon the Father has been accompanied by an equal lack of emphasis upon sanctification:

"This renewal has conspicuously lacked what has been at the centre of nearly every movement of new life in the history of the Church, a call for repentance from sin and self to God and holiness, and it is because that has not been basic to its message that it has so far been unable to grow." <sup>11</sup>

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10. op.cit.9. p.13.

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11. op.cit.9. p.45.

His book contains a thorough treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity and a critical evaluation of the Charismatic Movement in the light of this. In his conclusions, he states that the right theology for the movement is the classical trinitarian theology that is rooted in the New Testament, centring in the incarnation, death and resurrection of the only Son of the Father as the focal point of all creation and recreation. Earlier on, the reader encounters the statement that:

"All onesidedness in the faith or practice of the churches can be understood in trinitarian terms as a failure to do due honour to one of the persons of the Trinity, or to realize their proper relationship to one another." <sup>12</sup>

Small has recognised a very important point here, and his work is valuable in its emphasis upon the centrality of balanced Trinitarian doctrine to a healthy Christian movement. Forming as it does one of the basics of the Christian faith, the importance of an orthodox trinitarianism is too often overlooked, and this has been so where some parts of the Charismatic Movement are concerned. However, it would be wrong to surmise that the whole of the movement is deficient in this respect. A number of books have devoted some considerable space to the theme of God as the Father of the believer<sup>13</sup>, and this shows that the Father has not been forgotten by the Charismatic Movement en masse.

The Charismatic Movement has been linked by some critics with the heresy of gnosticism. Whether this term has been applied or not, some participants in the movement have certainly given the impression that they have a special knowledge of God through their empowering by the Spirit, and a relationship with Him which those outside this experience do not have. Charismatics often view themselves as the spiritually enlightened, and a gulf develops between charismatics and non-charismatics, the 'haves' and

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12. op.cit.9. p.24.

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13. See for example: Michael Harper: You Are My Sons. Hodder and Stoughton. 1979.

the 'have-nots'. This is a form of gnosticism in all but name, yet it has been recognised as such by too few. Michael Harper warned of the dangers of gnosticism in 1972<sup>14</sup>, as did Tom Smail in 1977<sup>15</sup>. But there has been little consideration of whether the way in which charismatic experience itself is presented does not have distinct gnostic tendencies. To correct the gnostic overtones that it possesses, the latter needs a far-reaching theological re-examination.

The major issue in the Charismatic Movement with regard to orthodoxy and heresy is inevitably that of the participation of Catholics. Within its Catholic context, the Charismatic Renewal is wholeheartedly orthodox, reaffirming traditional Catholic doctrines and renewing devotion to Catholic sacraments and practices. This orthodoxy has proved its strongest asset in achieving acceptance by the church authorities. Indeed, the new appreciation of Catholic traditions, increased devotion to the Mass and to Mary, respect for the clergy, and the restoration of many priests and nuns who were on the point of leaving their orders, have convinced many in the hierarchy that the Charismatic Movement is positively beneficial to Catholicism. This in turn has reaffirmed Catholic charismatics in their belief that they must remain within their church and work for its renewal. The consequences of this were recognised by Edward O'Connor in 1974, as he himself describes:

"In the closing session of the International Charismatic Conference at South Bend in 1974, I pointed out that the future of the Charismatic Renewal as well as its fruitfulness would depend, so far as Catholics were concerned, on the latter being deeply rooted in the Church. Concretely, this means their acceptance of the magisterium of Peter and of the spiritual motherhood of Mary. Christ was born of Mary and the Holy Spirit,

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14. Michael Harper: "Are you a gnostic?" Renewal No.41. Oct/Nov. 1972. pp.28-29.

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15. Tom Smail: Editorial ("In Tune With The Trinity: 2"). Theological Renewal No.5. Feb/March 1977. pp.4-7.

and this indissoluble association remains a vital one." 16

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal has fully embraced this position, and a priest's report on a conference that he attended during Easter 1978 is representative of those involved in the renewal. He speaks of:

" ... the way in which the Blessed Virgin was so much a part of the new life in the Spirit and also the way in which the Pope was presented to us as a prophetic and charismatic figure in his own right. In both these areas I experienced a complete revision of my own thought and was more convinced than ever before that the charismatic renewal in the Catholic Church is absolutely orthodox and in line with the basic doctrines and devotions of the past." 17

Whilst this has been a reason for rejoicing amongst Catholics, it has been a cause for disquiet amongst Protestants, and notably so amongst a considerable number of Protestant charismatics who believe that heresy is involved here. Their concern has centred around the status of the Pope, Mariology, and what they regard as the non-biblical or extra-biblical doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Coupled with this is the fact that unity between Protestants and Catholics, of which the Charismatic Movement has been an expression, frequently ignores the question of Catholic doctrinal incompatibilities with biblical teaching. With reference to the link between the Holy Spirit and Mary expressed by Cardinal Suenens at the International Conference on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in 1973, a reader of Renewal writes:

"It seems to me that there is something fundamentally wrong: In order to receive the Holy Spirit it does not matter anymore what we believe. It is just the experience that counts. I would say

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16. Edward O'Connor: Pope Paul and the Spirit. Ava Maria Press. 1978. p.xii.

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17. Brian O'Sullivan. Goodnews No.17. Aug/Sept. 1978.

that we have reached a very dangerous state! May it be that the days have come of which Jesus is talking in Mt.ch.7.v.21? Unity based on such grave error cannot be the unity of the Holy Spirit, who is a spirit of truth. If the charismatic renewal is genuine the Holy Spirit will also bring renewal to the doctrine of a church, especially where it is so utterly unbiblical as the doctrine of Mary ... I enjoy fellowship with Catholic Christians very much, as long as we are on biblical ground. But when the Roman Church and her never changing doctrines take the place of the teaching of the Holy Spirit, then we have to become very alert indeed!" 18

He voices his suspicion that the Catholic Church will use the Charismatic Renewal to bring Protestants back to the infallible Church of Rome, and requests that the position of Renewal be made clear on the subject of the Catholic Church and its doctrine and involvement in the Charismatic Movement. Other readers express particular concern over Mariology and prayer to the saints. One person regrets the publishing in Renewal of articles by people who still hold unbiblical doctrines, and suggests that the Fountain Trust examine itself closely lest it become an unwitting instrument of the ecumenical movement. He too foresees Rome officially embracing the Charismatic Movement and "using it to their own ends". Feeling that he speaks for many charismatic evangelicals in the Church of England, he asks whether the Fountain Trust is 'going Catholic', and passes on to a wider audience the question posed by friends who want to know whether the apparent baptism in the Spirit received by Catholics can be genuine<sup>19</sup>

. Another correspondent writes with regard to Mariology:

" ... please let scripture interpret itself, and not fit any of our traditions into scripture unless we can see quite clearly

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18. Letter ("The Holy Spirit and Mary"). Renewal No.51. June/July 1974. pp.8-9.

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19. Letter ("Is the Fountain Trust going Catholic?"). Renewal No.51. June/July 1974. pp.8-9.

that they come from there. However helpful a tradition may seem, or however much psychological comfort we receive from it, this is no measure of how right it is." <sup>20</sup>

Although letters are published which regret the criticisms of Catholicism and seek to offer a defence<sup>21</sup>, definite disquiet is evident on the part of a significant proportion of the readership. But articles written by practising Catholics continue to be published in Renewal<sup>22</sup>, and the Charismatic Movement in the Catholic Church continues to feature in reports and comment.

It is understandable that Protestant concern over heresy on the part of Catholic charismatics has centred around the issue of Mariology, for this has been a prominent feature of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Indeed, the latter has given renewed impetus to Marian devotion. Cardinal Suenens has undoubtedly been influential in this respect, his widely used book, A New Pentecost? containing a chapter devoted to "The Holy Spirit and Mary". However, the re-emergence of Mary in the devotional life of charismatic Catholics has also apparently been spontaneous. Numerous people recount how utterances in tongues were either interpreted or recognised as prayers to Mary, and how those newly baptised in the Spirit have experienced a personal desire to express devotion to her. In addition to this, Mary has frequently appeared in visions described by Catholic charismatics, often alongside the person of Jesus.

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20. Letter ("The Holy Spirit and Mary"). Renewal No.51. June/July 1974. pp.8-9.

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21. Letters ("Sources of authority"; "Blessed but not divine"). Renewal No.51. June/July 1974. pp.7-8.

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22. Renewal No.99. June/July 1982 contained an article by the Catholic priest Dom Alan Rees: "Love Bade Me Welcome". pp.37-43.



It is the inevitable conclusion of an examination of the contents of Scripture that the Catholic presentation of Mariology is a serious error which has no biblical basis. Any distinction between honour and worship remains unsatisfactory, since in popular piety there is in reality no distinction between the two. The implications of Mariology are grave ones, for Mary is elevated to such an extent that she misplaces the Church as the Bride of Christ, and becomes in effect the Bride of God. It must therefore be concluded that the Marian doctrines constitute heresy. So what is one to make of the prominence of Mariology in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal? It is noteworthy that 1967, the year when the Charismatic Movement first emerged in the Roman Catholic Church, was the fiftieth anniversary of the apparition of Mary at Fatima in Portugal. In that particular year too, Pope Paul asked Mary to pray to her son for world peace and also for internal peace for the church. Nineteen-sixty-seven also saw the publication of A Question of Conscience, in which Charles Davis, a leading British Roman Catholic theologian and priest, explained why he had left the Catholic Church. Davis has this to say about Mariology:

"There are signs that the great growth of Marian doctrine should be regarded as a temporal phenomenon in the Church, due to causes that are now being combatted, such as the neglect of the humanity of Christ and an excessively juridical concept of the Church, both calling for a human and feminine counterbalance. Moreover, the close association of Marian doctrine with papal infallibility is not surprising. The glorification of Mary has gone hand in hand with the exaltation of the Church. Mariology is in many respects the myth and cult of a triumphalistic Church." <sup>23</sup>

Whether his assessment of the contemporary situation was accurate or not, Davis had noted the important point that Marian devotion has filled a void in a church where God the Father is often understood as a distant figure, stern and unapproachable. As a mother figure who was honoured by God and gave birth to Jesus, Mary was ideally qualified to fill this void and to bridge the gulf between man and God. Francis MacNutt touches upon this

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23. Charles Davis: A Question of Conscience. Hodder and Stoughton. 1967. p.148.

point when he suggests that a reason for the popularity of prayer to the saints and to Mary is that suffering has been viewed by the Church as coming from God and therefore not to be resisted:

"I think that these devotions met a basic human need of people who wanted to pray for their real material concerns. If God seemed distant, if it was his will to permit sickness, Mary, at least, seemed approachable." <sup>24</sup>

The appeal of Mary as a source of love, understanding and comfort has perhaps grown in an increasingly uncertain and distressing world. This and the fact that attention had been drawn to her in 1967 may be a tenuous link with her centrality in the Charismatic Renewal, but it may go some way towards furnishing an explanation of why spiritual expression should be directed towards her. To some extent it is natural that a person will give expression to a new or revitalized faith by means of the concepts and practices with which they are already familiar. The extent to which human psychology is inter-twined with religious experience is complex, and it requires a careful and informed investigation beyond the scope of this thesis. However, one wonders how much human factors operate in religious experience, resulting in the case of visions, in the recipient seeing in some measure what they expect to see. It is certainly not easy for a Protestant to understand how deeply rooted are the traditions and symbols of Catholicism, and there is no parallel to this in Protestantism. Any move away from such religious expression could be expected to be gradual rather than immediate. However, the sovereignty of the "Spirit of Truth" over human factors can all too easily slip from the picture, and Protestant observers and participants in the Charismatic Movement are justified in wondering why a correction of error has not taken place after one and a half decades.

It has been a frequent observation over the years that Mary has been substituted for the Holy Spirit in popular Catholic thought. It is therefore interesting that the Charismatic Renewal has seen no decrease in

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24. Francis MacNutt: Healing. Ava Maria Press. 1974. p.71.

her prominence in the face of the emergence of emphasis upon the Spirit. In some circles, Mary has been viewed almost as the 'patroness' of the Charismatic Renewal, yet others have complained that she has no part in it<sup>25</sup>. This suggests that there is some variation in Marian devotion, but whether this follows patterns established prior to the Charismatic Movement or is in some way linked to the movement is unclear. Catholic charismatics are eager to avoid misunderstanding and to explain to Protestant charismatics exactly how and why they "honour" Mary. This often involves a reduction in her elevation, but even in the more restrained articles there are elements which a Protestant would still find unacceptable<sup>26</sup>.

Protestant charismatics find themselves in a dilemma over doctrinal issues which have such far-reaching implications as Mariology. Their desire for doctrinal correctness, and their eagerness for unity on the basis of what common ground there is cannot easily be reconciled. Inevitably, this frequently results in the unclear and somewhat awkward approach which recognises that doctrinal and historical differences need to be faced up to, but adds that this is not the only approach, nor indeed may it be the most important one. Even when misunderstandings are corrected, there is often an avoidance of the differences that remain, and this may be illustrated from the writings of Michael Harper. In 1971 he describes discussions with Kevin Ranaghan, the American Catholic charismatic leader:

"I was in for some big surprises that evening. I discovered that I had totally misunderstood Catholic teaching about a whole range of matters, from the Virgin Mary to the Mass and Papal authority. I still could not agree, but at least I now understood what Catholics really believed, and it was not nearly as bad as I had thought. I could see that much of it had been

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25. See editorial. Goodnews No.15. April/May 1978.

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26. See Lisa Reynolds: "The Spirit and Mary". Newsletter. July 1974. Also, Gerald McCann: "Mary: Her Essential Place in the Christian Life". Goodnews No.15. April/May 1978.

distorted by Protestant prejudice, and a further margin of misunderstanding had arisen due to different uses of words and theological phrases ... The gap between us began to shrink; I felt the Holy Spirit was at work in us both, tearing away the theological bric-a-brac of centuries. There were still differences, some quite big ones. But at least we now knew what we did or did not believe. I realised that for years I had been in a spiritual fog in this whole area." <sup>27</sup>

By 1979 he feels that many of his previous reservations concerning Catholicism resulted from misunderstandings, and he has come to believe that Catholicism can contribute a great deal to Christians of the Protestant Churches:

"Oh what an enrichment it has been to meet with Catholics and to be introduced to some of the treasure stores of catholic life! The Virgin Mary has come alive and I feel I know her now, in the same way as my evangelical heritage helped me to know St. Paul. I have come to love God's creation and the gifts of creativity He has given to His people. Nature and nature's art have come alive. Above all, I have come to love the Church and its historical heritage. For the first time I have seen something of the richness of the Church before the Reformation. The sacraments have come alive too. Not as lifeless mechanical rites, but as 'effectual signs', to use the language of the Reformers, or signs that work when there is faith. Holy Communion is for me like an oasis in a parched desert." <sup>28</sup>

Whether intentionally or otherwise, concentration upon the positive and fruitful aspects of Protestant-Catholic encounter results in a glossing over of serious differences, which both sides would interpret as heresy on

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27. Michael Harper: None Can Guess. Hodder and Stoughton. 1971. p.125.

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28. Michael Harper: This Is The Day. Hodder and Stoughton. 1979. p.51.

the part of the other. Such an avoidance of important issues can only cause confusion and will not ultimately further the cause of ecumenism, for a clear statement of what is and is not considered orthodox is essential if confusion and nebulosity are to be avoided.

The fact that the Catholic Church has a somewhat flexible attitude to truth has contributed to Protestant charismatic uncertainty over how to react to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Actual changes in belief are described as 'developments' or 'clarifications' of previous positions, which require new expression that is adapted to altered circumstances. Development of doctrine does not mean that a U-turn has been made, but rather that further progress has been made into the mystery of God that is involved in it. This means that orthodoxy itself becomes flexible and changes are not ruled out. Protestant charismatics are sometimes encouraged by this to wait for changes in the doctrines of papal infallibility, Mariology and ecclesiology, and there has certainly been considerable questioning in these areas by Roman Catholic theologians over recent years. In addition to this, the suggestion has sometimes been made that charismatic Catholics tend to adopt some typically Protestant attitudes and, in effect, to move towards a more Protestant position themselves<sup>29</sup>. Protestant charismatics treat such reports with optimism, and often state that an unspecified period of time must be allowed for the necessary renewal and reformation of certain aspects of Catholicism. One wonders whether the Protestant Charismatic Movement has been too patient and has allowed a desire for unity to cloud matters of heresy. There has been, for example, a tendency in some Catholic charismatic circles to present Jesus primarily as a teacher to be respected and followed, rather than centring attention upon present salvation through faith in Him. This is a primary issue which has always been one of the main differences between Catholics and Protestants, and the fact that this position is still maintained by some Catholic charismatics should strike a cautionary note in

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29. Reference is sometimes made to a study by American Jesuit sociologist, Joseph Fichter: The Catholic Cult of the Paraclete, 1975. His conclusions are usually regarded as questionable but interesting. His study has been criticised by sociologists on methodological grounds.

those who think that few fundamental differences remain.

It is impossible to estimate how many Catholic charismatics have left the Catholic Church. Some of them have forecast the massive exodus of charismatics that many Protestants hope for, but the fact remains that the majority of Catholic charismatics are still within their church and have become increasingly devoted to it. Protestant charismatics appear to have become resigned to this, and the concern expressed in the mid-seventies has largely died down. It is felt that in the face of the current situation, the most constructive attitude is one which emphasises the benefits of the Catholic Renewal in generalized terms<sup>30</sup>. Consequently, it is left largely to critics of the Charismatic Movement to elucidate the important doctrinal issues which must ultimately be faced. Perhaps the most realistic attitude currently found in Protestant charismatic circles is that expressed by a leader of the Bradford Circle<sup>31</sup>, who recognised that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal resulted from a genuine move of the Holy Spirit which will eventually "blow the Catholic tradition apart". To some extent, the experience of the Catholic charismatics has overtaken their theology, but he is confident that the theology will 'catch up', and he feels that the ultimate 'clash' will come on the issue of where authority actually lies. Catholic charismatics have tended to emphasise the role of the individual in the charismatic community, and have side-stepped the issue by so doing. This person stated that he had been informed that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in America was dividing into two distinct groupings: those who stressed mariology and Catholic tradition, and those who were going against the written laws of the Church because their experience was bowling them beyond theological boundaries. Francis McNutt, the Catholic priest who was widely known for his involvement in the ministry of healing and left the Catholic Church in 1980, provides a well-known example of somebody in the latter group. Whilst believing firmly that the Catholic Church is in serious error, this person felt that people who have rejected the

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30. See for example: Eric Fife: The Holy Spirit and Common Sense. Kingsway. 1980. p.180.

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31. Interview with leader of the Bradford Circle. February 1981.

Charismatic Movement because of Catholic participation are shortsighted. The point that God does not withhold experiences of Himself because a person either does not understand them or erroneously interprets them is an important one. It is possible to hold the view that the Holy Spirit has been genuinely at work in the Catholic Renewal, yet also to believe that Catholic charismatics must recognise their separate identity from Catholicism, and that their allegiance must be to clear biblical orthodoxy, not to background and traditional loyalties.

Both Protestant and Catholic charismatics have recognised the necessity of maintaining an orthodox doctrinal position, although they would interpret the latter differently from each other. They both emphasise, however, that the test of orthodoxy is not doctrine alone, for doctrine remains incomplete unless coupled with true Christian love and power. It is notable that in the Charismatic Movement Christian love and life are often presented as a test of orthodoxy prior to that of doctrine, and the fact that the balance has tipped in this direction will be of concern to some. Numerous critics have complained of a lack of teaching in the Charismatic Movement, but the place of teaching has been emphasised increasingly as the movement has developed, and this criticism is no longer valid of the Charismatic Movement as a whole. The type and manner of teaching, however, is more susceptible to criticism. There has often been insufficient care in testing new ideas by the contents of Scripture to ensure that they are biblically sound and balanced, and serious imbalance has resulted, as in the case of the extreme forms of 'discipling'. A tendency to pick out isolated texts and emphasise their particular significance has also led to the accentuation of minor points and the neglect of major ones, and a consequent lack of proportion. The greatest danger in the Charismatic Movement has always been a lack of balance, and it is salutary to note that in the past heresy has often originated from just such a failure to maintain balance. The proportionate teaching of Scripture is the safeguard here, and it must be thoroughly and carefully considered not just by the teachers, but also by those receiving the teaching. In 1965 Michael Harper discussed three areas in which he felt that imbalance was likely to occur: over-emphasis of the Holy Spirit to the detriment of Father and Son; overshadowing of the authority of the Bible by emphasis upon the spiritual gifts; and a dispensing of

the Church's ritual and sacraments in favour of spiritual gifts<sup>32</sup>. His anticipation of these problems has proved accurate, such excesses frequently being found within charismatic groups which veer away from orthodoxy.

Harper has also correctly distinguished between heresy and schism. The latter is not necessarily the result of heresy. It may be the outcome of the Church's failure to be sensitive to the Spirit, who consequently stirs up movements which are God's second best and live dangerously close to schism all the time, even if they never actually reach that point<sup>33</sup>. Speaking for the Fountain Trust, Harper pointed out that as well as maintaining a biblical orthodoxy, they purposefully avoided causing divisiveness, never speaking to a group of people from any church without the permission of the minister and lay leaders<sup>34</sup>.

The centrality of the Bible in the prevention of heresy has already been noted, and submission to church authorities is urged by many charismatics as a further check. It is felt by denominational participants that the movement is at its healthiest when firmly rooted in the environment of the local church. When expressed within the existing organizational Body of Christ, it can offer its most valuable contribution and be used by God to bring about renewal.

Michael Harper maintains that the Charismatic Movement has a positive effect with respect to orthodoxy. Speaking personally, he states that it strengthened rather than undermined his beliefs in traditional Christian doctrine such as the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, the Ascension and the Second Coming<sup>35</sup>. Not only is the movement orthodox in itself, but provided

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32. Michael Harper: As At The Beginning. Hodder and Stoughton. 1965. pp.118-120.

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33. Michael Harper: Let My People Grow. Hodder and Stoughton. 1977. p.50.

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34. Michael Harper: None Can Guess. Hodder and Stoughton. 1971. p.86.



it is subject to biblical authority and church authority, it encourages orthodoxy in its adherents. Where aberrations have occurred, charismatics rightly point out that it is too simplistic to take these as a sign that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, cannot be at work in the movement. Edward O'Connor pointed out in the early years of the Charismatic Movement that it is when religion is alive that errors are likely to arise, not when it is dead. The proper perspective is one which welcomes the liveliness which the movement brings into the Church, and is ready to deal pastorally with mistakes as they occur<sup>36</sup>. A particularly compelling argument is that of C. Ernest Tatham, who reminds critics that the Holy Spirit was moving mightily in the events recorded in Acts, yet doctrinal perversions and fleshly manifestations still occurred. This does not, however, cancel out the possibility that God was genuinely active, and all the evidence points to the fact that a genuine movement of the Holy Spirit may still take place even when doctrinal and behavioural errors surface<sup>37</sup>. Tatham has placed his finger upon a crucial point here in his recognition that God is working with imperfect human beings, and that the evidences of His activity are therefore likely to be tarnished by the effects of this imperfection. Church history bears evidence that the genuine workings of God are often accompanied by extremism and error, simply because God chooses to work with and through His sinful followers. Whilst orthodoxy must remain a central concern, this factor must also be taken into account when evaluating the Charismatic Movement.

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35. op.cit.37. pp.141-142.

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36. Edward O'Connor: The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church. Ava Maria Press. 1971.

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37. C. Ernest Tatham: Let The Tide Come In. Creation House. 1976. p.83.

Chapter 16.GUIDANCE AND REVELATION

In a movement in which direct experiential encounter with God is an important factor, the nature of guidance and revelation needs careful consideration. The possibility of receiving direct individual guidance from God is assumed throughout the Charismatic Movement. It is felt that baptism in the Holy Spirit opens one up to the promptings of the Spirit, resulting in increased awareness of the presence of God and a more continual communion with Him. This is accompanied by the expectation of receiving direct personal guidance from God, and such guidance is frequently referred to in passing, with no explanation of exactly how it was received. One gains the impression that direct individual guidance is regarded as nothing out of the ordinary, but as commonplace for the Christian who has been baptized in the Holy Spirit: as a direct result of the baptism, a person is therefore encouraged to expect clearer and more definite guidance.

Most participants in the Charismatic Movement are able to recount examples of specific guidance from their own experience:

"God called me ..."<sup>1</sup>

"God said the rest of the family would be (baptized in the Spirit) too ..."<sup>2</sup>

"You can imagine my delight over a year ago when the Lord began to speak to us about leadership in terms of commitment and submission ..."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Interview with participants in the Charismatic Movement. July 1980.

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2. *ibid.*

Michael Harper describes how he received a sermon point by point in a dream<sup>4</sup>. On another occasion, he arranged a meeting to be addressed by David du Plessis (the Classical Pentecostal speaker), without making preliminary arrangements with him, yet convinced that this was the right thing to do. The meeting was a success, and in Harper's opinion it turned out to be crucial for the spread of interest in the baptism in the Spirit phenomenon<sup>5</sup>.

The manner in which such guidance is known is difficult to define. It comes via the Holy Spirit and is described variously as an inner voice, an intuition, or a discernment that becomes so much a part of a person that it is difficult to split the guidance off from this person. Guidance may often be a matter of an individual expressing themselves, believing God is with them, and moving in terms of that inner witness. In addition to this, guidance may come through prophecy, interpreted tongues, dreams and visions. The last two in particular are singled out as the most frequent means of guidance, often being experienced by the same people on behalf of themselves, another person or the fellowship as a body. One person who claimed particular ability to understand events in contemporary Christianity from God's point of view and was confident that God had guided him in this, explained why he was sufficiently receptive and close to God for this to be so:

"I can see all this because, firstly, I have years of (Christian) maturity; secondly, I have known the grace of God in a very deep way which others haven't known and therefore I have a deep commitment; thirdly, the community (of the church in which he was involved) allows me to get a clearer perspective of what God

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3. George Tarleton: The Church in the House. Private publication.

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4. Michael Harper: None Can Guess. Hodder and Stoughton. p.55.

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5. op.cit.4. p.59.

is doing; and fourthly, above anything else, anything that comes from God, in this case a revelation, is an act of His grace. It makes me no better than anyone else." <sup>6</sup>

People such as this appear to have few difficulties in confidently ascertaining God's guidance with regard to specific matters. Others, however, admit to puzzlement over guidance, and would look more to direction received via other people than to a personal means of determining God's will. Those involved in 'discipling' practices tend to refer to their 'teacher' when decisions or choices have to be made, and what the teacher says is taken to be God's will and is therefore complied with.

Much of the literature produced by the Charismatic Movement gives the impression that guidance is always a straightforward matter, apparent in a clearcut way. But this is by no means always the case and the pitfalls are apparent. Whilst affirming the reality of direct individual guidance, many participants in the Charismatic Movement are very much aware of the dangers and provide cautionary advice. Michael Harper acknowledges that the fanatic claims divine guidance for doing the most outrageous things, and oscillates from one "leading" to another, claiming the confirmation of dreams, voices, visions, and prophecy for clearly irrational behaviour. Harper quotes from John Wesley's description of fanaticism as "expecting the ends without the means", expanded thus by Wesley:

"The expecting knowledge without searching the scripture, and consulting the children of God; the expecting spiritual strength, without constant prayer and steady watchfulness; the expecting any blessing without hearing the Word of God at every opportunity."

Harper then adds to this:

"... the expecting signs and wonders without strict obedience to the will of God, expecting guidance without allowing time to

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6. op.cit.1.

wait upon God. The danger is obviously very applicable to those who believe in the operation of spiritual gifts, and the promise of power through the Holy Spirit." <sup>7</sup>

Elsewhere, he advises a wariness of sudden impulses to do anything, especially things which seem unreasonable or ridiculous. Pointing out that guidance is usually preceded by a time of waiting on God and testing any apparent leadings, he states that the more important an action or decision is, the more surely God prepares the Christian for its consequences. One of Satan's tactics against the believer is to deceive him into thinking he has heard God's voice when he has not, and recklessness on the part of the Christian is a mark of spiritual immaturity<sup>8</sup>. Harper correctly notes that the claim to a 'higher revelation' received in a supernatural way is the basis of some of the modern cults. People today seem particularly open to the temptation to seek superior knowledge and new truth, and they have consequently been side-tracked by fantastic illusions, instead of following "the old and safe paths"<sup>9</sup>.

Harper advocates the exercise of responsibility and common sense where guidance is concerned. He advises against the forsaking of normal safety precautions in the belief that God will provide protection without such aids, and he also has strong words to say about the practice of selling all one's possessions and 'living by faith':

"Sadly such people are often living on other people's faith. That some are called to live this way there is no doubt. But that it is exceptional and that such people should receive overwhelming guidance and confirmation concerning this is also

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7. Michael Harper: As At The Beginning. Hodder and Stoughton. 1965. pp.115-116.

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8. Michael Harper: Walk In The Spirit. Hodder and Stoughton. 1968. p.31.

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9. Michael Harper: Spiritual Warfare. Hodder and Stoughton. 1970. p.99.

clear from the NT, where Paul deals sternly with those he calls 'busybodies'. 'If they will not work', he writes, 'neither let them eat' (2 Tim.ch.3.v.10). It is salutary to see the example of Paul himself, who 'laboured with his hands' rather than be a drain on church funds."<sup>10</sup>

However, although Harper advises caution in matters of guidance, it must be said that some of the examples quoted above from his own experience could be regarded as reckless, had not the results apparently justified the action he took. This illustrates the fact that any controls are difficult to exercise in what must ultimately be a subjective realm. If the only authentication of guidance is to be found in the end-result of action taken upon its basis, then in cases where the guidance is not genuine, this becomes obvious too late. Perhaps the answer lies in the extent to which the individual is able to exercise objectivity concerning their own subjectivity.

But is there no more determinate way of distinguishing between the true and the false? Most writers agree that a number of factors should be considered when guidance is being sought. David Watson<sup>11</sup> lists four: circumstances; the counsel of other Christians; the Bible; and deep, inner conviction resulting from prayer. If only one of these factors is present, he advises that further confirmation should be awaited. However, if all four are inter-woven, this presents a much clearer indication of God's direction, and ideally, they should all be allowed to complement each other. It is often assumed that if a direct word of prophecy is received, no further guidance is necessary. However, Watson provides cautionary remarks here. He points out that in the commissioning of Barnabas and Saul recorded in Acts ch.13.vv.1-3, the prophecy probably acted as a confirmation of guidance already received: the Holy Spirit had already called them, and so the prophecy simply confirmed that calling. The reader

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10. op.cit.8. p.32.

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11. David C.K. Watson: One In The Spirit. Hodder and Stoughton. 1973. pp.54-61.

is advised to be wary of other Christians getting guidance for them, especially through a claimed word of prophecy, which must certainly be tested. An individual's personal convictions, however strong, should equally be open to the prayerful opinions of others. The manner by which the Bible is used for guidance needs considerable care. Whilst the measuring up of a proposed course of action against biblical principles is a correct and important procedure, there have been countless examples of people opening the Bible at random and 'receiving a text' which indicated a specific course of action in their particular situation. But Watson warns that this is a dangerous practice, and the exception which proves to be genuine guidance can never prove the rule. Although these verses may be noted carefully, they will seldom in themselves constitute clear guidance without additional confirmation. Watson considers that one's own personal communion with God in prayer is the most important aspect involved in guidance:

"Never go forward without a sense of God's peace about that matter. This deep, inner conviction, coupled with the other strands already mentioned, is the most vital factor in guidance. We should look at the circumstances, listen to other Christians, watch for verses or passages that 'speak' to us in a personal way; but above all pray for that peace of Christ to settle the issue in our hearts."

A writer in Renewal concurs with this conclusion and illustrates the deceptiveness of circumstances with an example from Scripture:

"... if we turn to God's instructing Samuel to anoint Saul, the first King of Israel, we find that a series of nice little events followed each other - three of them - all just as Samuel prophesied, and yet Saul's kingship was not really the will of God ... happy diminutive signs of confirmation may be very deceptive ... things apparently disastrous or ominous may accompany the project of the Lord ... There is a Scripture that says, 'Let the peace of God rule in your hearts'. If peace remains and rules in any discussion it is a good test as to God's will and is far more reliable than a few pleasant signs." 12

The majority of magazines circulated in denominational charismatic and house church circles frequently contain articles concerned with the practicalities of divine guidance, and the topic is obviously one of primary concern to many people. Contrary to the fears of critics of the Charismatic Movement, the usual approach is one that warns against obsession with prophecies, visions and the like, and advises a practical, common-sense attitude which allows for 'supernatural' guidance without demanding it. A speaker at a Catholic conference stressed the need to avoid over-spiritualising:

"Not 'let's pray' but 'let's talk', not 'the Lord has told me', but rather, for example, 'I feel that' ... We should realize instead that God ordinarily guides us through one another when we're open and united, speaking and listening in love and using our common sense in the light of the situation, the teaching and the authority of the Church, and the guidance of Scripture." <sup>13</sup>

Ian Petit speaks of a need for balance in practical planning:

"Clearly two extremes must be avoided, that of over-organizing, and that irresponsible attitude which says 'It is all up to the Spirit'." <sup>14</sup>

Intellectual capacities are to be used to the full when decisions are to be made: these are not opposed to the workings of the Spirit, but the two are complementary to each other and work together.

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12. E. Stafford Young: "Finding out God's will". Renewal No.16. Aug/Sept. 1968. pp.8-10.

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13. Tape of a meeting at the Leaders' Conference held at Hopwood Hall in 1980, discussing the National Pastoral Congress.

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14. Ian Petit: Goodnews. No.5. Aug/Sept. 1976.



But some writers obviously feel that a toning down of inspirational guidance has resulted from countering of previous over-emphasis upon it in the Charismatic Movement. Heribert Muhlen feels that he must rather stress the supernatural aspect of guidance:

"It is however obvious that the history of the Church did not develop along the lines of merely prudent reflections ... Someone who is under divine inspiration is therefore driven to act in a very definite way without being able completely to foresee the consequences and judge in advance. Mere human counsel and shrewd balancing of one course of action against another are to no avail. The person who is driven by the Spirit of God is faced only with the decision as to whether he is ready to give way to the impulse of the Holy Spirit or not ... Anyone who submits to an impulse of the Holy Spirit must allow his human prudence to take second place and perhaps face persecution and ridicule." <sup>15</sup> (his italics)

David Watson has concluded that there are two opposite mistakes about guidance, the first of which is an over-eagerness to ascribe almost every prompting and feeling to the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit. A Christian may well claim special revelations and unusual guidance to give the impression that he is more spiritual than others. Or else he may feel that he must prove to himself the activity of the Holy Spirit in his life, and consequently be over-anxious for evidence of His activity in the form of signs and revelations. The second mistake involves the opposite extreme of denying all such activity of the Spirit, reducing guidance to 'sanctified commonsense' - a "much over-worked phrase" in Watson's view<sup>16</sup>.

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15. Heribert Muhlen: A Charismatic Theology. Burns and Oates. 1978.

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16. op.cit.11.

Turning now to the subject of revelation, we may note at the outset that the Charismatic Movement's predecessor, Classical Pentecostalism, often distinguished in theory between inspiration in the Bible and inspiration in the realm of the Spirit, yet frequently failed to do so in practice. The situation has been similar in the Charismatic Movement. Despite emphasis upon the authority and infallibility of the Bible, words received from God by means of prophecy, visions and the gifts of wisdom and knowledge are sometimes placed effectively on the same level as Scripture. Some groups state that whilst charismatic utterances may be prompted by the Spirit, only the contents of the Bible are absolutely certain and reliable. Yet when charismatic utterances are placed in the category of the 'Word of God', distinctions become blurred, and it is hardly surprising that some people assume that the contents of charismatic 'messages' are a continuation of what is already recorded in Scripture. Particular attention may be drawn to the similarity between the process by which an interpretation of speaking in tongues occurs and the manner in which Scripture is understood to have come into being. The contents of the interpretation originate in the mind of God and are communicated to the believer by the Holy Spirit. The gifts of prophecy, wisdom and knowledge bear a similar resemblance, but interpretation of tongues is particularly striking because of the more extraordinary element involved.

Whilst some charismatics seem to accept the possibility of 'new revelation' by implication only, others use the term quite openly and believe that God has more of Himself to reveal with regard to His character and purposes. One of the clearest advocates of new revelation has been the American J. Rodman Williams, who writes:

"It has happened before that one speaks a 'thus says the Lord' and dares to address the fellowship in the first person - even going beyond the words of Scripture ... it is good to know that this was happening long ago ... The Spirit as the living God moves through and beyond the records of past witness, however valuable such records are as a model of what happens today. For in the Spirit the present fellowship is as much the arena of God's vital presence as anything in the Biblical account."<sup>17</sup>

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17. J. Rodman Williams: The Era of the Spirit. Logos International. 1971.

Those who take this line approach the question of the sufficiency of the biblical revelation in what they regard to be a logical way. Because the various parts of the Bible were addressed to specific situations, it is unlikely that the Bible contains all that is necessary and this makes new revelation feasible. Some believe that truth may be found in many spheres in addition to that of prophecy, such as literature or the ideas of other people. They therefore seek to be open to God, should He wish to address them by any means whatsoever. Juan Carlos Ortiz may well have been influential in the spread of this approach. With reference to 1 Cor.ch.2.v.6, he states that those who have reached Christian maturity speak "that which God has revealed to the mature" (his italics). Paul could only tell a portion of what God revealed to him (2 Cor.ch.12), and this suggests to Ortiz that the Bible does not contain all that God has revealed:

"Yet if Paul, in that beginning of the church, could have such a vision, such a revelation, how much more should we who live in the end time when the church should be in its final stage of growth." <sup>18</sup>

These people are, however, in the minority. The majority of charismatics distinguish between revelation of the way of salvation and the principles of the Christian life, which was completed in Scripture, and revelation concerning particular situations, such as may be received today in the gifts of prophecy, wisdom and knowledge. Revelation thus becomes a more fluid concept.

But it is questionable whether revelation can be divided up into categories in this manner with clarity. The usual outcome is one of ambiguity. David Smith, for instance, has described prophecy as "a portion of God's truth to give in love in the present", and this is an example of the type of statement which is very much open to interpretation<sup>19</sup>. In a

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18. Juan Carlos Ortiz: Call to Discipleship. Logos International. 1975. pp.11-13.

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19. David Smith: "Guarding the Gifts". Renewal No.64. Aug/Sept. 1976. p.24.

religion which takes as its starting point God's revelation to Man, clarity concerning what does and does not constitute this revelation is essential. When additional revelation to that of Scripture is allowed, the Bible becomes not the final and unique source of revelation, but more a guide or a witness to the additional revelation which may still be to come. Many charismatics are eager to point out that prophetic utterances are not meant to supercede Scripture, but to clarify it. However, the distinction between clarifying Scripture and equalling Scripture is an unsatisfactory one, and it introduces a subjective and mystical element into the understanding of Scripture, which leaves little room for the benefits of objective study of the Bible. Parallels can be detected here with the approach to the Bible of Neo-Orthodoxy, which emphasizes the subjective element in one's encounter with Scripture. For the neo-orthodox, the Bible is inspired when one has an experience of its truth, and its objective truth is not recognised. Some charismatics come very close to this position.

Those charismatics who attempt to resolve the problem by distinguishing between the authority of the Bible and that of additional revelation have not provided a satisfactory solution. Their distinction is a somewhat artificial one, for some parts of God's revelation cannot be more authoritative than others. However, it may well be that the wrong terminology is being used altogether in that there has been a failure to distinguish between revelation, and the guidance and direction from God which is a part of every believer's relationship with God, but which may be consciously recognised and articulated to varying degrees by each individual. Because one claims to have received vivid revelation from God concerning a particular course of action, is this really any different in essence to the case of a person who is equally convinced of God's direction by the less extraordinary means of the advice of others, the working out of circumstances, and conviction and peace in personal prayer? 'Guidance' is a more fitting description in both cases, and the term 'revelation' is inappropriately ascribed in such situations. People who have experienced charismatic renewal are often very bold in using the phrases 'God said' or 'God told me', whereas non-participants in the movement tend to be much more reticent in this respect. Being 'filled with the Spirit' and experiencing something of His inspiration in one's words or actions is not

the same thing as being inspired by the Holy Spirit to write Scripture or pass on revelation. This needs to be recognised by charismatics and critics alike. The means by which God makes His will known to people should not be described as 'revelation'. Similarly, the pin-pointing or illumination of certain aspects of biblical revelation - such as may occur in the exposition of the traditional sermon - should not be placed in the category of revelation. The Holy Spirit is active here in the application of what has already been revealed, not in the uncovering of something new.

The Charismatic Movement has brought a new interest in mysticism to some of its participants. Vivid experience which cannot be totally contained within the confines of rationality has resulted in a reaching out towards that realm which ventures beyond the reaches of intellectual understanding and expression. The Catholic mystics are frequently included in the 'charismatic line' of people who were sensitive to the inspiration and infilling of the Holy Spirit down through the ages, and their writings may be a particular source of encouragement and illumination to charismatics. In some groups, interest in mysticism has been accompanied by an indifference to doctrine and theology, and Christianity has become essentially subjective and experiential. Critics have feared that the Charismatic Movement is progressing beyond the sphere of reason to that of mysticism. In his detailed examination of Enthusiasm, R. Knox commented in 1950:

"The mystic, from the very nature of his religious approach, is tone-deaf, as a rule, to theology."<sup>20</sup>

This is a cause of concern to John MacArthur with regard to the Charismatic Movement:

"The price of Charismatic mysticism and subjectivism is much too high. Everybody is free to do and say what he thinks God is telling him. The uniqueness and central authority of the Word is being lost, and we are headed for a mystical Christianity that

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20. R. Knox: Enthusiasm. Clarendon Press. 1950. p.583.

will eventually have no real content or substance." 21

A writer in Renewal expressed disquiet about this as early as 1966, warning against the tendency to:

" ... divorce the Spirit from the Word so as to neglect the truth of God, concentrating only upon 'power' and 'life' at the expense of sound Scriptural doctrine. That road, in its turn, will lead us into a dangerous and fanatical mysticism, soon becoming heterodox, tossed about by various winds of doctrine, because both anchor and rudder have been jettisoned on the voyage. If the first road leaves out the emotions, the second leaves out the mind." 22

With reference to the influx of eastern religions into western society and the incompatibility of these with Christianity, there has been some debate concerning whether aspects of mysticism can be authentically Christian. Writers have pointed out that Christian mysticism can be distinguished from that of eastern religions, in that it is centred upon God:

" ... silence is not therefore a sinking into oneself in which one hopes to discover the ground of all being in oneself - as in certain Far Eastern techniques of meditation - but a fundamental listening to the word of God that challenges the whole man or woman and raises his or her activity to a new pitch of intensity." 23

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21. John F. MacArthur: The Charismatics: A Doctrinal Perspective. Zondervan. 1978. p.37.

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22. J.P. Baker: "The Spirit of God and the Word of God". Renewal No.5. Oct/Nov. 1966. p.20.

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23. op.cit.15. p.285.

Charismatics claim that an authentically Christian mysticism can make a positive contribution to the spiritual life of the believer. And in response to statements that the Charismatic Renewal has got stuck and that there is uncertainty of the way ahead, Rosemary Radley has suggested in Renewal<sup>24</sup> that the Holy Spirit could be ushering in "an era of Christian mysticism". She regrets the common mistrust of the term on the grounds that it is contrary to the Christian Gospel, because of its popular association with eastern religions and the occult. The Church has a long tradition of Christian mysticism, and she claims that mystical experience is akin to what the Holy Spirit is doing today in charismatic renewal. She is convinced that Christians involved in the Charismatic Movement who were once suspicious of Christian mystics because of their experience of the Holy Spirit will now view them more sympathetically as teachers of the spiritual life. The fact that there have been false visionaries must not prevent the studying of the valid witness of the genuine. The present day need is for a deepening of the spiritual life, and the achievement of this will come about through the life of prayer in pursuit of wholeness and holiness. Thus a life of contemplation and intercession is advocated, and this will remedy the Church's current aridity in the area of the Holy Spirit's work:

"The initial experience of receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit is but an eyeopener into the realm of the Spirit, when the love of God is a tangible reality, not just a concept to be accepted with the intellect."

Rosemary Radley believes that Christians today are in need of 'spiritual directors', and she notes that the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches have a tradition of spiritual direction which is independent of the Charismatic Renewal. But owing to recent (unspecified) trends in the western church, there are insufficient priests and lay people with the necessary spiritual understanding, maturity and discernment to fill this important and necessary role. She therefore suggests the establishment of courses for would-be spiritual directors who:

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24. Rosemary Radley: "Spiritual direction". Renewal No.81. June/July 1979. pp.29-31.

" ... wish to learn more of the traditional spiritual techniques, as taught by the masters of the art of prayer, the great Christian saints and mystics."

St. John of the Cross receives special mention as one who made a unique contribution in his detailed documentation of the path of a soul towards the experience of union with God. This documentation is described as "the most scientific analysis of the spiritual life the Church possesses". The statement of the need for spiritual directors is interesting in the light of the 'disciplining' systems found in some house churches, where the disciple is under the direction and instruction of his teacher in both spiritual and practical matters. Other people in addition to Rosemary Radley have obviously felt the need for somebody to oversee their Christian development.

It is the Catholic tradition which has nurtured mysticism in Christianity, and the concept is much more foreign to the Protestant mind. Some of the misunderstandings between the two traditions are undoubtedly caused by Protestant inability to comprehend exactly what a Catholic means when he makes mystical allusions: whereas Catholics often mean things to be understood in a mystical sense, Protestants tend to take things in an actual sense. Private visionary experiences are, of all the charismatic phenomena, the most familiar to Catholics, for such experiences have had a profound influence upon the development of Catholic piety. Visions have on the other hand been regarded more as an extraordinary new phenomenon in Protestantism and the concept still remains quite foreign to many of those who do not participate in the Charismatic Movement. Has Catholicism therefore got more inherent understanding of the phenomena introduced by Classical Pentecostalism than has Protestantism in general? It would be stretching a point to make dogmatic assertions about this, but Peter Hocken has nevertheless identified the common ground between Pentecostalism and Catholicism as lying in Catholic mysticism<sup>25</sup>. Hocken states that in the

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25. Peter Hocken: "Charismatics and Mystics". Theological Renewal No.1. Oct/Nov. 1975. pp.11-17.



area of spirituality which for the purposes of his article he takes as synonymous with the mystical tradition, the Catholic tradition may have a key contribution to make as the Charismatic Movement spreads. This is precisely because the charismatic experience frequently brings to new life all that a Christian positively is: all the spiritual values of one's past - both personal and communal - are diffused with the Spirit. As a Catholic, Hocken feels that many of the greatest spiritual values are enshrined in what is often referred to as the "mystical tradition", hence his link between the Charismatic Movement and mysticism. He notes that the charismatic experience has a number of affinities with contemplative prayer as described by mystical writers, and this is particularly so in the case of the inception of praying in tongues. Indeed, some Roman Catholic writers have described being baptized in the Spirit in these terms. Moreover, one of the Catholic milieux most touched by the Charismatic Movement has been that of the contemplative religious orders, which have direct links with the mystical tradition. Hocken points to the connection here between 'charismatic maturity' and previous penetration of the Catholic tradition. The American Vinson Synan has produced a list of the common ground between Pentecostals and the mystical tradition, and Hocken quotes from this. Both have a strong emphasis on the individual and on ecstatic religious experience, as well as on the sacred Scripture as the basis of genuine spiritual experience, on Christian perfection and the sanctification of believers, and on multi-stage levels of religious experiences. There is also a strong common belief in the miraculous dimension in religion along with the acceptance of its possibility and desirability today, and a strong emphasis upon the fact that ecstasies, visions and miracles do not of themselves prove the depth of a person's spirituality, but that 'heroic sanctity' or 'holiness of heart' is the ultimate test of one's sanctification. Hocken adds that to speak in these terms is not to deny all originality to the Charismatic Movement, and that opinions necessarily differ as to how new a work of God is. He has certainly made his point, but some of the above points are rather wide of the mark when applied to the Charismatic Movement. The emphasis on Christian holiness and sanctification, for instance, has been lacking, and has only recently started to receive more attention, figuring very little at the time when his article was published.

Hocken notes that the dialogue in Rome between Catholics and Pentecostals in 1973 made a distinction between mystical experiences which are generally oriented towards a personal communion with God, and charismatic experiences which are generally directed towards a building up of the community. He feels that this distinction has some foundation, and he denotes teaching concerning communion with God as the sphere of Christian life in which charismatics can expect to learn most from the mystical tradition. Nevertheless, he does feel that it is slightly misleading to link the word 'charismatic' with witness and mission in contrast to communion with God. One of the distinctive features of Pentecostalism has been the bringing together and inter-connecting of the two, relating the mystical and the missionary and affirming that both are for all Christians and not just for a restricted elite. Hocken goes on to make a particularly noteworthy point with regard to Christian growth. This is that every Christian bowled over by an over-powering spiritual experience is tempted to try to repeat it or at least to try to bring back the mood of its aftermath, and in this way there can be a ritualization of the initial mood which prevents a sensitivity to the Lord's ongoing activity. The writings of the mystical tradition concerning spiritual growth are thus very relevant here for their emphasis that the Christian life is a progression, and that what may be interpreted as a sign that things are going wrong may in fact be a leading on to the next stage.

The Charismatic Movement has been described on numerous occasions as an 'enthusiastic movement'. Certainly it displays those characteristics of enthusiastic movements described by Knox in the first chapter of his book<sup>26</sup>. Rene Laurentin lists illuminism amongst the dangers inherent to the Charismatic Movement, describing the former as the idea of direct communication with God, the expectation of spiritual light without making full use of one's own intelligence, and the hasty attribution of all that happens in prayer and life to the transcendent and quasimiraculous action of the Holy Spirit. Reliance upon direct light from God goes hand in hand with a depreciation of the free exercise of reason<sup>27</sup>. And Donald Gelpi

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26. op.cit. 20. pp.1-8.

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27. Rene Laurentin: Catholic Pentecostalism. Darton, Longman and Todd. 1977. See pp.163-177.

warns:

"The irrational and unreflective enthusiast is all too apt to dismiss every form of religious experience which is not identical with his own. As a result, he is apt to disrupt the work of the Holy Spirit, and to begin to pass moral judgment on others, and to decide dogmatically that God demands of them exactly what he has demanded of the enthusiast himself." <sup>28</sup>

This feature has been particularly evident in teaching about the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and only recently has correction with regard to this taken place. But is enthusiasm in itself an undesirable facet of religious faith? Gelpi goes on to distinguish between divisive enthusiasm, which he has described in the above quotation and believes to be harmful, and orthodox enthusiasm, which is clearly distinguishable from this and can be beneficial. The latter is ecclesial as opposed to individualistic and subjectivistic, tolerant and loving rather than factionalistic. Furthermore, it is not anti-intellectual or anti-clerical, and it recognises a charismatic dimension to every human activity and is explicitly sacramental.

Enthusiasm is certainly not a sufficiently dominant factor in the Charismatic Movement for the latter to be labelled as an 'enthusiastic movement'. People involved in the movement tend to emphasise that emotionalism and ecstasy are not encouraged, and that whilst charismatic experience may be emotional, it is not uncontrolled. Moreover, charismatic experience is primarily a question of God acting on the human scene rather than Man being lifted into the sphere of the divine, as in the case of former-day mystics and visionaries. The importance of the mental and psychological health of those involved in charismatic renewal is constantly stressed, and the exercise of responsibility and control such as is befitting and glorifying to the Holy Spirit is urged. The majority of groups exercise careful discernment with regard to the visionary and prophetic phenomena, and only in a minority of cases do excesses go

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28. Donald Gelpi: Pentecostalism: A Theological Viewpoint. Paulist Press. 1971.

unchecked. Unfortunately, it is usually these cases which are brought to the attention of non-participants and which present a false impression of the Charismatic Movement.

Chapter 17.EMOTION AND INTELLECT

The issue under consideration in this chapter is that of the relationship between emotion and intellect, and the relative importance of experience and doctrine in the Charismatic Movement. Church history bears witness to a continuous search for balance between these two elements of the Christian faith, as various groups have emphasised one or the other, tried to redress the balance in favour of the one they deem the most important, or attempted to achieve that elusive balance between the two. The Charismatic Movement has sought to re-emphasise the role of tangible experience in the life of the believer, on the basis that this has been a greatly neglected aspect of the Christian faith. Experience is presented as the mark of reality, a vital ingredient of Christianity, and this is clearly stated in the very first issue of Renewal:

"Christians are seeing that doctrine without experience is like faith without works - dead. By experience we do not mean emotions or feelings - but reality."

"This is an exciting subject. There are some who regard religion and excitement as strange bed-fellows. To them, a person who finds the Christian life thrilling is a religious fanatic. We do not agree. The Acts of the Apostles reads like a thriller. Why should the acts of modern apostles read like a government white-paper? How tedious and insipid is most of our church life!"<sup>1</sup> (his italics)

In their emphasis upon experience, have participants in the Charismatic Movement tipped the scale too far? This has been the concern of many observers and, significantly, of numerous people personally committed to the movement.

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1. Michael Harper: editorial ("Time for action"). Renewal No.1. Jan. 1966. p.3.

A large proportion of the people attracted to the Charismatic Movement are drawn by the personal testimony of participants, that is by the description of a personal spiritual experience and the visible effects of that experience in the individual's life. Sometimes there is little explanation of the basics of the Gospel, of a person's position before God as a sinner or of the demands which He makes of believers. The emphasis is rather upon what God can do for them, what they can receive from Him in the here and now. Whilst this is not in itself invalid, it is a somewhat incomplete approach, and may only present the experience, and not the understanding of how and why an encounter with God can take place. It is not nearly so difficult to present an experience as it is to present a detached explanation, and people gravitate more keenly towards the former, tending to respond more readily to the experiential. In a consideration of the mission of the Church, David Watson has referred to today's "feelings generation", commenting:

"People today need to feel God's presence and sense his reality before they are able to listen to his words." <sup>2</sup>

Has the Charismatic Movement unconsciously accommodated this characteristic of modern Man by emphasising the aspects which elicit the most ready response? Charismatic experience is often regarded as self-validating and there are shades of existentialism in this approach, which echo Kierkegaard's well-known dictum that 'Truth is Subjectivity'. The recent Anglican report on the Charismatic Movement in the Church of England recognised this when it suggested that a "Christianised existentialism" is to be found in some quarters of the movement <sup>3</sup>.

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2. David C.K. Watson: I Believe In The Church. Hodder and Stoughton. 1979. p.41.

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3. The Charismatic Movement In The Church Of England. CIO Publishing. 1981 .pp.41-42.

A further factor to consider is that any over-emphasis upon experience and the legitimacy of subjectivity in its own right inevitably affects the status of objectivity. Objective truth is an important element in Christianity, particularly as contained in the source-book of the faith, the Bible, and any eclipsing of this, whether intentional or unintentional, must be a matter of concern for many who hold this faith. The last two decades have seen a general shift in western religion away from objective doctrines to subjective religious experience. Consequently, people may share a particular faith not because they hold to the same objective criteria, but because they share a common religious experience. In some respects, a phenomenon in Christianity like the standard charismatic experience of baptism in the Spirit and speaking in tongues was - if this pattern was to apply - to be expected. A largely subjective approach to religion also has a tendency to engender the belief that experience unites, whilst objective elements such as doctrine divide, and this position has been apparent in some areas of ecumenism in the Charismatic Movement. Taken to its logical conclusion, it implies a new approach to theology. This is evident in a reader's letter to Renewal, which seeks to relate doctrine and experience by defining doctrine as the crystallization of revelation in experience and then suggesting that present experience surely points towards the removal of divisive deposits of doctrine<sup>4</sup>. If this position is adopted, then doctrine is at the dictate of experience and will be moulded accordingly.

However, the need for balance is recognised by many influential participants in the Charismatic Movement. Notable for its lucidity is Donal Dorr's consideration of the subject:

" ... how does this experience of faith relate to the explicit, verbalised faith of our creeds, our preaching and our teaching? Certainly it is not a replacement for such explicit faith. The meeting with God in the depths is not a substitute for rational-discursive knowledge about God. Either on its own is inadequate. If we undervalue objectivised discourse about God we

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4. Letter: "New approach to theology". Renewal No.58. Aug/Sept 1975. p.11.

tend to get bogged down in subjectivity and vagueness; and the teaching of religion becomes almost impossible. On the other hand, if we confine ourselves to 'objective' discourse, our understanding of God will find no deep roots in experience; and by treating God as an object we shall have missed his reality." <sup>5</sup>

Emotion and intellect each have a valid role to play in a person's faith, and where these are held in correct proportion to each other, they will safeguard against excess in either direction and provide a healthy stimulus to each other. Leaders in the denominational Charismatic Movement have repeatedly urged participants to study Scripture and books which expound Christian doctrine, and not only those which relate to experience. Whilst it is acknowledged that the Charismatic Movement has been used by God to show the proper place of feelings and experiences, Gavin Reid cautions that the proper place of the mind must not be forgotten either. God wishes His people to be totally and not just partially developed, and whereas one remains partially developed if emotions are suppressed and feelings discounted, this is also the case if emotions are allowed to be the dictators of one's life <sup>6</sup>.

A factor which has provoked criticism of the Charismatic Movement is that the use of the term 'baptism in the Spirit' to describe the central charismatic experience has arisen primarily by way of experience, rather than through an examination of Scripture and the doctrine contained there. There has been a tendency to fit Scripture around the experience, and this has provided ready-made ammunition for the critics, who claim that the Charismatic Movement has presented Christianity as a series of experiences <sup>7</sup>. Harold Parks recognised this problem, but he claimed that in

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5. Donal Dorr: Remove The Heart of Stone. Gill and MacMillan. 1978. p.114.

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6. Gavin Reid: "Weakness in Strength". Renewal No.63. June/July 1976. p.23.

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7. See for example, John MacArthur: The Charismatics: A Doctrinal Perspective. Zondervan. 1978. pp.58-59.



the present-day atmosphere within the Church, renewal was "well-nigh bound to come along the avenue of experience". He stated that the concern to reinstate the Church's theology in some quarters and to reshape her structures in others has been so relentless that any direct experience of God has been, in practice at least, relegated to the margin. God has therefore:

"... opened the floodgates to an experience of Himself which is altogether catholic and according to truth",

and Parks quotes David Watson's challenge:

"What is the reality of God if we have no experience of him?"

However, he goes on to write that experience is not unaccountable and that spiritual experience must always submit to the touchstone of Scripture. If the experience in question is indeed of God, then it will pass the test of Scripture and of the discipline of the Church. Acceptance of the genuine experience which God has to give will not displace theology or doctrine, for in God's economy and wisdom, the surrender of theology to experience and of experience to theology are both unnecessary. But whilst this sounds neat in theory, in practice difficulties often arise, and Parks admits the existence of what may be termed a 'theological confrontation' between Spirit-birth and Spirit-baptism, although this will be more of a problem for some than for others<sup>8</sup>.

In an earlier issue of Renewal<sup>9</sup>, John Baker dealt specifically with the relationship of emotions and intellect and attempted to show how experience has become an almost undesirable element in Christianity. He does this by providing a caricature of "the fairly typical Western

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8. Harold Parks: "What's in a phrase?" Renewal No.49. Feb/March 1974. p.20.

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9. J.P. Baker: "The mind and the Christian's life in the Spirit". Renewal No.44. April/May 1973. pp.14-18.

Protestant or Evangelical Christian" in his attitude to his intellect, intuitive faculty, emotions and imagination. This person, he says, relies on the conscious intellect, instructed by the Word of God and enlightened by this and by the Holy Spirit. He does not go by his emotions and this generally means the despising or repressing of them. Moreover, he distrusts intuition, whether his own or someone else's, trusting rather in his Spirit-taught - that is Bible-taught - understanding and reasoning powers. Imagination and visions are distrusted in favour of abstract, logical and propositional thought. Whilst he agrees that the Reformation emphasis on the intellect and the understanding in the life of faith of God and His Word is good and necessary, and pointing out that faith must never be based on emotions, Baker stresses that it is untrue that feelings do not matter.

The Charismatic Movement has sought to re-emphasise the place of the emotions and to correct the imbalance in the current 'cerebral Christianity'. In connection with this, a number of writers have traced the history of Christian thought with the purpose of showing how the early church's expectation of experience of God was gradually eliminated<sup>10</sup>. They believe that they have built up a strong case for a redressing of the balance, being eager to point out that the entire Bible is about experience of God. Furthermore, the Church must accept that experience offers a non-verbal form of communication which is of particular importance in worship and evangelism in the 'non-verbal' age in which she now finds herself.

The Catholic and Protestant churches have tended to be cautious about religious feelings for different reasons. Whilst Protestants have worried about excessive 'enthusiasm' which has at times taken the form of mass hysteria, the Catholic concern has been of a more theological nature. Until the theological developments of the sixties, Catholic doctrine

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10. The most detailed of these is American Episcopalian Morton Kelsey's theology of Christian experience, Encounter With God. Bethany Fellowship. 1972. Kelsey states that at the present time, the possibility of encounter with God is rejected by theology, philosophy and culture.

presented grace as occupying a supernatural realm inaccessible to ordinary human experience, and encounter with God was only to be known through faith. Although allowing for mystical experience, God was effectively barred from making Himself known in everyday human experience, and faith was understood in a very intellectualist sense. Reason was thus divided from emotion. However, faith is now generally understood as embracing the whole of humanity, encompassing spirit, body, intellect, will and emotions, and this has transformed the Catholic approach to encounter with God. Donal Dorr comments upon the new horizons which have resulted:

"It is an exciting world that is opened up for us by this new spirituality. A world where God is experienced as real, alive, relevant and, above all, near and concerned. A world swept by spiritual forces to which we become attuned by adverting to the spiritual currents flowing through our consciousness ..."<sup>11</sup>

The time was therefore ripe in Catholicism too for the appearance of a movement which would explore this newly emergent realm. Nevertheless, there is still great hesitation in the Catholic Church about religious experience. Catholic authorities repeatedly express concern about the possibility of substituting experience for doctrine, and the Charismatic Renewal has known some difficulty in harmonizing these two aspects of the Christian life:

"... with too objective an outlook there is the danger of thinking of a baptismal certificate as a 'ticket to heaven'. On the other hand, the subjective reaction can look only inwards to 'my experience', to what God has done 'for me in my life'. It looks to living in Christ as an individual experience only as if God was working 'for me alone'." (their italics)<sup>12</sup>

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11. op.cit.5. p.18.

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12. Newsletter. May 1973.

Certain practical consequences of the previous deficiency in Catholic doctrine are apparent. The Catholic Charismatic Movement has shown some uncertainty in its attempt to understand and cope with the new dimension of experience. Francis MacNutt has singled out healing as an area which has suffered in particular from over-emphasis in doctrine, stating that the latter must bear some responsibility for the loss of a lively sense of Christ's healing presence and power. Christ's cures have been presented solely as signs of the truth of His message, and over-emphasis of the aspect of proof has tended to distort the true place of healing in Christian living, to the neglect of the healing ministry<sup>13</sup>.

However, in their attempt to redress the balance, charismatics have often failed to maintain a balance themselves, tipping the scales too far in the opposite direction. Two tendencies are noteworthy, the first of which is the construction of universally applicable laws from the experiences of individuals. To take an experience and apply it to every other situation is an over-simplification of the working of God, yet this is what has occurred with regard to the baptism in the Spirit experience. The second tendency is an insistence upon a specific experiential encounter with God in the life of the believer, accompanied by the implication that if this has not taken place, there is a serious deficiency, which may even cast doubt upon the spiritual standing of the person in question. The existence of this tendency has been all too obvious to people outside the movement, but has been recognised by too few within it. In October 1980, however, a short article in Dunamis drew attention to the problems that result from this way of thinking:

" ... my work as an evangelist has brought me into contact with people who have made a commitment to Christ or who have sought the empowering of the Holy Spirit without having any real experience to put their finger on. Consequently, because of the testimonies they read, their lives are full of doubt and a lack of assurance."

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13. Francis MacNutt: Healing. Ava Maria Press. 1974. pp.90-91.

The writer goes on to say that God does not have "an almighty rubber stamp" and that there is no one instantaneous pattern in His working. The editors respond by stating:

"What matters is not how people are committed to Christ and filled with His Spirit, but the fact that this has happened no matter what the time scale! God deals with different people in different ways, precisely because we are different people with different personalities." (their italics) <sup>14</sup>

The latter is a crucial point which, it seems, has received very little attention in the Charismatic Movement. Where the Christian life is concerned, experience has often been held in primary place above intellectual understanding and assent.

Although the place of the mind and the importance of intellectual understanding have been referred to on numerous occasions by leaders in the movement, the fact remains that at grass-roots level one frequently finds a tacit anti-intellectualism. In some circles it is felt that the Charismatic Movement is beyond the intellect. The availability of the Holy Spirit to guide and direct implies that one no longer has to depend on oneself and the capabilities of one's mind, for the Holy Spirit is both bigger and more comprehensive than the human intellect. In such circles there is less dogmatism concerning charismatic experience. However, this is not the result of any realization that God does not operate in this area by means of any one particular procedure, but it is because it is felt that the Holy Spirit cannot be contained in a system which is intellectually satisfactory. The intellect and its value is not necessarily dismissed, for the underlying concept is rather that an intellectual understanding does not necessarily provide the 'last word'. But its importance is considerably diminished. Although the intellectual understanding of something may be helpful in as far as it goes, it is felt that the idea that there is nothing more to be said once intellectual analysis has taken

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14. Peter Amos: "About Testimony" and editorial response. Dunamis. No.33. Oct. 1980. p.13.

place is detrimental where God is concerned. Not only does it attempt to confine God within the human understanding, but it also assumes that anything which does not fit neatly into this is immediately suspect. Seen from this angle, the intellect may thus be a hindrance to the Christian's relationship with God and knowledge of Him, and so it may even obstruct God's purposes.

However, one rarely encounters the suggestion that the emotions should be given full rein or that experience should be the only thing of value for the Christian. It is generally recognised that the emotions do need to be controlled and that subjectivity in experience must be balanced by objectivity. This conviction is clearest amongst those involved in practical leadership and former theology students, who seem to have given the matter more serious thought than other people. Many of those who give the impression of holding an anti-intellectual position do recognise that experience can be over-emphasized, and that an experience of God should go deeper than simply the 'experience' level. What they often do not realize, however, is that by playing down the role of the intellect, they are in effect contributing to any over-emphasis of experience.

In house church circles, the place of doctrine often seems to have been overtaken by stress upon the life of a Christian. For example, a former Bible College student commented with regard to the involvement in the Charismatic Movement of those who are theologically liberal, that he would not look for proof of the validity of their involvement solely in the fact that they had had a charismatic experience. He would firstly want to know more about this experience, and would secondly inquire about their life, whether they were living under Christ's Lordship. The two criteria to be considered are therefore experience and life, not experience and doctrine, and this is indicative of a significant factor in the thought of the Charismatic Movement, and one which would certainly ease ecumenical difficulties.

Comments concerning worship activity often reveal underlying attitudes and presuppositions. It is the people who have not given much thought to the relationship between emotional involvement in worship and intellectual understanding of what they are doing who make the remarks which critics

would seize with relish. Describing a non-Christian girl who enjoyed dancing in the worship meetings, one person said that the girl did not understand what she was doing, but that she enjoyed herself. The implication was that provided the enjoyment was there, any understanding of the intended purpose behind the practice of dancing was very much secondary in importance. It is easy to understand a comment such as this from someone who felt that intellectual understanding had previously been so thrust upon them that their Christian faith had consequently become dry and devoid of any emotional expression. However, the very important fact that conversion to Christ involves a conscious decision, and at least some degree of participation by the faculty of thought and reason had been overlooked.

A particularly interesting comment was made by a person who leads worship meetings. Contrary to what one might anticipate, he felt that he should be emotionally uninvolved in a meeting that he was leading in order to be able to give adequate leadership. Whilst acknowledging the legitimate role of the intellect here and the necessity of controlling the emotions, more importantly there was no suggestion by the person concerned that because he was not emotionally involved in the worship, he was not a part of it. This shows that emotion does not always play such a dominant role as some critics would have one believe.

It is invariably true that those who have reacted against the role of the intellect and of doctrine have done so because of their backgrounds. This is amply illustrated by Graham Perrins of the Fullness Circle, who found that doctrinal obstacles marred his fellowship with other Christians and his experience of unity with them:

"... A friendly Baptist pastor agreed to baptize me. My links with the Church in Wales were severed.

"I later moved from the Baptists' disagreeing with their concept of New Testament church life. My years with the Brethren ended when my elders issued an ultimatum that I must stop teaching the Baptism and gifts of the Spirit even to those who might come round to my house asking questions.

"As I look back over these major crises, I see how my church life and fellowship was based essentially on doctrine. If there was a difference over doctrine then fellowship became tenuous and at times impossible. Friendships were formed but we could only swim together in the same theological pool. I began to yearn for something far more substantial." <sup>15</sup>

The Fullness writers speak for many people outside their house church grouping when they state that doctrine is frequently a hindrance to fellowship, and that unity and fellowship is to be found more on the experiential level, being dependent upon a genuine relationship with God and the practical experience of this in one's life. Maurice Smith expresses this as follows:

"I believe that one of Satan's most dangerous weapons at this time is traditional Christianity, whether evangelical or otherwise. People brought up in this realm find fellowship with others very limited. They seek to get others to 'see' what they have seen, and fellowship becomes a matter of believing the same things. Each time the enemy of our souls convinces us that ours is a spiritual attitude, and that the other party is breaking fellowship. On the contrary, we have made fellowship impossible because doctrine has been made the ground of relating. We are all at different stages and we all have more to learn. I have found myself having fellowship with High Churchmen which was impossible with many evangelicals! This means that our hearts were open to God at that moment.

"Fellowship in Christ becomes a difficult position to maintain because many will want to know your doctrine before they accept you ... The result of such an attitude is that the more light we receive, the more difficult we find it to have fellowship with anyone.

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15. Graham Perrins: "Joined Together". Fullness Vol.10. p.12.



"Fellowship is inexplicable: you either have it, or you don't. Whenever you are currently partaking of the life of the Lord, and others are too, then you have it ...

" ... What I am saying is: 'Have you got a real this-moment experience of God in your heart in spite of your circumstances?' " 16

The bond between Christians is therefore based upon their common experience of Christ. This is a valid emphasis, yet doctrine must inevitably be a factor here too. It must be considered to what extent doctrinal disparity may be allowed to go before it affects the validity of related experience. Certainly, it would seem that in some circles, experience is placed on a much higher footing than intellectual understanding and agreement.

John Baker, whose caricature of the typical intellectual Christian was presented above, is very much in favour of the reinstatement of experience in the life of the believer. Nonetheless, he notes several examples of the dangers of over-reaction in this direction. It may well be implied that the mind is basically carnal, functioning against the Spirit of Christ, and 'getting in the way'. A general playing down of the part of the intellect and understanding in the Christian life may also progress to a cutting down on the steady and disciplined study of the Bible. It will be obvious from preceding chapters that this has already proved to be so. Baker goes on to note that it may be assumed to be more spiritual to receive revelation by visions, or 'pictures', than in words, when both go side by side in Scripture. Similarly, prophecy may be seen as a more important or exalted ministry than that of teaching. Another tendency is that of enthroning the emotions and evaluating every meeting, experience, and so on merely in terms of their emotional content and impact. Here Baker points out that emotionalism is no substitute for true emotion or a well-ordered emotional life. Finally, he has correctly observed that some people appear to delight in being unsystematic, in their reaction against attempts to confine God within a system which leaves no room for the voice of the Holy

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16. Maurice Smith: "True Fellowship". Fullness Vol.6. p.13.

Spirit. Baker firmly states that it is wrong to give up on biblical or systematic theology, or to delight in untidiness for its own sake. He speaks of:

"... the pitfalls of fanatical emotionalism, or mystical aberrations which are even worse than dead orthodoxy." (my italics) <sup>17</sup>

If one extreme is preferable, Baker thus verges towards that of the intellect.

A particular subject which has aroused concern with regard to the relative roles of emotion and intellect is that of speaking in tongues. This practice has been criticised for giving free rein to the emotions and for 'by-passing the mind', rendering intellectual processes obsolete. Michael Harper has considered these criticisms in some depth, and with regard to the first one, he denies that speaking in tongues is basically an emotional experience:

"It may bring about an emotional release, and there are Christians who sometimes need this. But it is not this in essence. In fact there is nothing necessarily 'emotional' about speaking in tongues."

Harper is not alone in taking issue with the translators of the New English Bible who have translated ἑτεροις γλωσσαις 'ecstatic utterance', stating that this totally misrepresents the nature of the gift. Unlike the phenomenon manifested in other religions, Christian speaking in tongues is never the result of working oneself up into a frenzy so that other factors - psychic or psychological - can take over. In response to the suggestion that in public tongues occurs chiefly after noisy demonstrations and emotional fervour, Harper states that in his own experience this is not necessarily true. The gift is much more often manifested during the quieter moments of a meeting. Although the Holy Spirit does sometimes move

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17. op.cit.9.

a meeting to become noisy, and the gift may be manifested during this time, Harper distinguishes between noisiness, which may be of the Holy Spirit, and disorderliness, which cannot be of Him<sup>18</sup>. Another point which strengthens his case is that respective manifestations of the gift in one individual may not be accompanied by the same emotional state:

"It may well be that whereas our first manifesting of this gift was accompanied by some excitement and emotion, when we come to exercise it the next day, it appears flat and cold."<sup>19</sup>

It is certainly true that whilst one may sometimes hear speaking in tongues accompanied by some considerable emotion, on just as many other occasions it is delivered in a very forthright and unemotional manner. Harper is right to counter the criticism as he does.

Moving on to the other matter of concern with regard to this charismatic gift, participants in the Charismatic Movement often state openly that the recipient of the gift by-passes the normal intellectual processes when he uses it. This is felt to be dangerous on the basis that the usual controls of mind and reason can no longer be applied if this happens, and the phenomenon is sometimes seen as an example of overt anti-intellectualism. Harper is typical of many charismatics in his unashamed usage of the phrase 'by-passing the mind', and he believes that such an occurrence is a legitimate one because it enables the Christian to find satisfactory expression for prayer and worship, which he is unable to do when faced with the limitations of his own language. The early Christians, he claims, appreciated the benefits of this gift:

"Many ... were simple-minded people, ignorant and unlearned, for God chose the foolish and the weak, the low and the despised in this world, and these people would have been more than grateful

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18. Michael Harper: Let My People Grow. Hodder and Stoughton. 1977. pp.10-11.

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19. Michael Harper: Walk In The Spirit. Hodder and Stoughton. 1968. p.27.

for a gift which, by-passing the mind, helped them to speak to God in the Spirit and worship and adore their Lord and Saviour in words they could never find." (my italics) <sup>20</sup>

Harper describes speaking in tongues as:

"... a means of expressing worship, a leaping past the limitations of the human mind, so that our tongue takes wings and the prosaic turns to poetry." (my italics) <sup>21</sup>

He justifies this 'by-passing of the mind' in the following way:

"Is it not natural, knowing the limitations of the human mind, that God should give at this juncture a gift or ability to 'express fluently what the heart is desperately wanting to say? The bottleneck is the human mind, which boggles at the wonder and majesty of God, and cannot keep up with the desire which surges up from our innermost being. The mind, wonderful mechanism that it is, can act like a dam when the rivers of living waters flow from the heart. God is not a 'dam-buster'. The dam has an important function. Without the mind we would be like animals. But in those moments when 'Jordan overflows its banks' the gift of tongues is a God-ordained channel or instrument temporarily by-passing or transcending the intellectual processes." (my italics) <sup>22</sup>

As has happened in the experience of other people, Harper's initial experience of speaking in tongues occurred in his sleep, and he feels that

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20. Michael Harper: Power For The Body Of Christ. Fountain Trust. 1964. pp.36-37.

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21. op.cit.19. p.43.

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22. op.cit.19. p.22.

this throws further light on the process in relation to the mind:

"Looking back I can understand what the Holy Spirit was doing. I have come to believe that the Lord edifies us, as well as protects us, during sleep at night; and that this can be very exciting ... Because of various mental blockages the Holy Spirit chose to break through during the night. But the moment my mind 'switched on' again, the old blockages returned. Now this is not to say that we are to 'let our minds go blank'. That is a very dangerous procedure. What I have just said only applies to our sleeping hours, when we are unconscious anyway." <sup>23</sup>

The clear line of reasoning in all this is that the intellect can be a hindrance and a barrier to the individual's communication with God. The implications of this are far-reaching. It seems that Man is not able to communicate satisfactorily with God through the processes which he already possesses as a God-created being, and it could be inferred from this that the atonement provided through Christ did not completely open up the full means of communication between Man and God after all. And what of those who do not receive the gift of tongues, or, as charismatics prefer to put it, have the gift, yet never put it into practice? The inevitable conclusion is that their worship, prayer, and general communication with God must be somehow deficient, and here we come up against the issue of first-class and second-class Christians once more, a distinction which, although denied, is implicit in much charismatic doctrine and theology.

It is easy to criticise a phenomenon which is not fully understood, and in spite of much confident writing on the subject, it is debatable whether even the tongue-speakers fully understand the gift of tongues. It is appropriate at this point to note the words of Kilian McDonnell:

"Tongues is ... a nonrational expression of prayer in much the same way that an abstract painting is a nonpictorial, nonobjective expression of some deep interior feeling which the

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23. Michael Harper: None Can Guess. Hodder and Stoughton. 1971. pp.55-56.

artist might not be able to express in pictorial objective forms. Neither 'nonrational' nor 'nonobjective' are synonymous for irrationality. In the nonrational and the nonobjective there can be both 'sense' and meaning." <sup>24</sup>

This raises the question of the nature of the 'tongue' being spoken. Harper gives the example of an Indian girl praying in tongues in a known language (English), thus indicating that tongues may sometimes be recognised as a specific human language. He also leaves open the possibility of an unrecognised tongue being an angelic or non-human language. If, however, some people's tongue is a human language, why should it be a more adequate means of expression than their own native language? Harper's explanation of tongues and the function which he ascribes to it may be fitting if the language is angelic or non-human, but it is somewhat illogical if it is human.

Just as speaking in tongues is usually presented as a means of expressing the inexpressible, so attempts to understand the phenomenon may be futile efforts to explain the inexplicable. Charismatics are not unduly worried if this is so, for they are convinced of the value of the gift, that it does not constitute sheer emotionalism and that if it does indeed by-pass the intellect, this was what God intended. One final point to note is Harper's claim that the experience of baptism in the Spirit and speaking in tongues proves in some instances to have a therapeutic value in cases of mental illness:

"Far from driving people to psychologists, as some have claimed it does, it is delivering people from need of their services. Many people experience release from tensions and inhibitions which leads to a more integrated and balanced life. And which of the most normal of us have not some part of our personalities out of the true? There is much scope in this field." (his italics)

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24. Kilian McDonnell: Charismatic Renewal and the Churches. Seabury Press. 1976. p.49.

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25. Michael Harper: As At The Beginning. Hodder and Stoughton. 1965. p.110.

Although not completely understood, these alleged beneficial results of speaking in tongues illustrate the charismatic's belief that experience does not have to be understood intellectually to be genuine and profitable.

The idea of 'by-passing the mind' is not only encountered with reference to speaking in tongues. There is some suggestion that this is a necessary process in other matters too. For example:

"The voice of God ... will be heard continually by a people who are willing to abandon the product of the human mind and will, to make room for the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit." <sup>26</sup>

This implies a dichotomy between the intellect and experience and it is unfortunate when people talk in terms of 'either/or' rather than understanding that two elements may in fact have a complimentary, though complex, relationship. Similarly, music may be presented as:

"... a medium which can by-pass the mind and touch deeply into the area of soul and spirit ... One of the best ways of conveying the heart of something is by means of a good tune. Music evokes a response at deeper levels than our intellect. Our thoughts and actions can become directed by the emotions generated deep in our being." <sup>27</sup>

In ecumenical matters too, the implication is that it certainly helps matters to steer clear of the sphere of the intellect. Tom Flynn quotes a priest's testimony in which it is stated:

"My ecumenism is less of the mind and more on the level of shared experience of the Lord." <sup>28</sup>

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26. Tony Pullin: "The Sleeping Beauty". Fullness Vol.12. p.9.

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27. Bob Gillman: "Songwriting". Fullness Vol.17. p.20.

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28. Thomas Flynn: The Charismatic Renewal and the Irish Experience. Hodder and Stoughton. 1974. p.93.

What is clear from the above is that problems are bound to arise when intellect and emotion, doctrine and experience, objectivity and subjectivity, are split away from each other and treated as independent entities. It is too often forgotten that intellect and emotions are complimentary facets of the whole person. The Joint Statement of charismatics and evangelicals recognised this, and attempted to highlight the importance in faith and worship of the whole person:

"Both doctrine and experience, word and Spirit, must go together, biblical doctrine testing, interpreting and controlling our experience, and experience fulfilling, incarnating and expressing our beliefs."

This delicate balance is the only means of avoiding a dead, rigid and barren orthodoxy on the one hand, and an uncontrolled, unstable and fanatical emotionalism on the other<sup>29</sup>. That recognition of the former has come from evangelicals could perhaps reassure those people who assume that evangelicals are unaware of the dangers. Nick Isbister has contributed an article to Renewal in which he suggests that the Lordship of Christ over the mind of the believer is one aspect of "perfection (or maturity) in Christ". The ministry of the Holy Spirit covers both the nurturing and fostering of emotional (or mental) health and balance, and the development of a Christian perspective upon all issues. Isbister states that in the past, one has found in the Charismatic Movement the argument that the Holy Spirit will show things to the believer freely, spontaneously and liberally, and that this prevailing emphasis on spontaneity and experience has led to a myopic understanding of the work of the Spirit in the mind of the believer<sup>30</sup>. But it is more easily said than done to hold the two

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29. Joint Statment: Church of England Evangelical Council and Fountain Trust. Theological Renewal Occasional Paper. No.1. April/May. 1977. p.5.

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30. Nick Isbister: "The mind and the Spirit: some perspectives". Renewal No.76. Aug/Sept. 1978. pp.16-18.



spheres together and allow them to complement each other. The Malines Document is useful in this respect. It speaks of the role of the intellect in producing and appreciating abstract knowledge, whilst experience is also knowledge, but the type which is perceived as factual<sup>31</sup>. Knowledge is thus the product of both mind and experience, and this draws the two together whilst simultaneously maintaining their distinctiveness. It would be a mistake to attempt to solve the problem by fusing mind and experience together, for this would result in inaccurate and muddled thinking. We may illustrate this by a passage on healing, in which the author completely fails to distinguish between objectivity and subjectivity:

"... symptoms, though they are apparently subjective (as if you really have the illness they suggest), are not sickness ... reject symptoms that argue against the wholeness you know in your heart that you have."<sup>32</sup>

The two are merged hopelessly together and a very confused statement results. The task for the Charismatic Movement is to maintain the distinctiveness of objectivity and subjectivity, whilst at the same time pointing to their inter-dependence. Fusion or inter-change of the two only blurs the matter.

The swing from objectivity to subjectivity which characterises modern society is characteristic of the Charismatic Movement, and is present in many aspects of its teaching, beginning with its primary emphasis on the full experience of the Holy Spirit and His gifts, and reaching into several other areas, underlying most of what the movement stresses. The desire to redress the balance in the direction of subjectivity is a legitimate one, but there has been insufficient safeguarding against the dangers inherent in subjectivity itself. In his study of Classical Pentecostalism, Walter Hollenweger has shown how the early stress on experience in this movement

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31. Cardinal Suenens: Theological and Pastoral Orientations on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Word of Life. 1974. p.21.

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32. John MacLauchlan: "Q & A". Fullness Vol.15. p.20.

has in the course of time given way to the primary place of doctrine. He claims that this has come about because the majority of members and even a number of pastors have no longer undergone the experience of baptism in the Spirit<sup>33</sup>. One wonders whether the Charismatic Movement will develop in like manner. Certainly, there has been increasing emphasis on doctrine over the years, and with the widening of the movement to encompass a more general 'Church Growth Movement', a greater number of those involved may not have received a baptism in the Spirit. A natural redressing of the balance may therefore occur.

Meanwhile, the stress upon a faith which embraces experience as well as intellect is a valid one. Ian Petit strikes an ideal balance when he writes:

"Doctrine is very important, but doctrine that remains as things believed in without ever experiencing their truth, can remain cold and remote."<sup>34</sup>

Michael Harper questions whether theology can be taken seriously when those who produce it are sometimes almost completely isolated from the main stream of Christian life<sup>35</sup>. Peter Hocken follows a similar line of thought in stating:

"Theologians need to be more prepared to speak of their own walk with God, for the adequacy of any man's theology does have some relationship to the depth of his own Christian experience."<sup>36</sup>

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33. Walter Hollenweger: The Pentecostals. SCM. 1972.

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34. Ian Petit: Goodnews No.6. Oct/Nov 1976.

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35. op.cit.18. p.208.

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36. Peter Hocken: "Salvation: The Heart of the Charismatic Renewal". Theological Renewal No.18. June 1981. p.15.

Harper denies that the Charismatic Movement has stressed experience to the neglect of theology. He believes that the movement's basic theological position is sound, but allows that its theological presentation may be inadequate. He is unable to accept that beneficial effects can be produced upon the basis of theological error, but does believe on the other hand that sound theology may not necessarily produce concrete benefits in the lives of the people who hold to it. Does this in effect give experience the upper hand? This is not necessarily so. What can be said, however, is that in the Charismatic Movement doctrine can be no substitute for it.

Appendix ITHE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CLASSICAL PENTECOSTALISM AND NEO-PENTECOSTALISM

It is generally agreed by church historians that Classical Pentecostalism was 'born' at the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles in 1906, and since then Pentecostal churches of many different groupings have developed throughout the world. The growth of Classical Pentecostalism has been thoroughly documented by Walter Hollenweger (The Pentecostals, SCM, 1972), Nils Bloch - Hoell (The Pentecostal Movement, Allen and Unwin, 1964), and Prudencio Damboriena (Tongues As Of Fire, Corpus Publications, 1969). In Britain, the three main Classical Pentecostal groupings have been the Assemblies of God, the Apostolic Church, and the Elim Pentecostal Church.

Neo-Pentecostalism developed in the form of the Charismatic Movement within established non-Pentecostal churches, and it has received a mixed reaction from Classical Pentecostals, varying from whole-hearted support and encouragement to extreme hesitation and suspicion. Many Classical Pentecostals originally hoped that Neo-Pentecostals would leave their denominations, and by so doing reinforce Pentecostalism's insistence that churches without emphasis on baptism in the Spirit and speaking in tongues are seriously deficient. However, over the years it has been gradually realised that the presence of Neo-Pentecostals within non-Pentecostal denominations has had the beneficial effect of bringing about the acceptance of Pentecostal phenomena in churches which formerly allowed no place for the practice of charismatic gifts. The Charismatic Movement has achieved what Classical Pentecostalism acknowledged its failure to do when the latter's exponents left the established churches. The Charismatic Movement is increasingly seen in this light and is now viewed positively by the majority of Classical Pentecostals. A pioneer of this viewpoint was David du Plessis, the Classical Pentecostal who offered much valued support and advice to the early Neo-Pentecostals. There is now frequent co-operation between Classical Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals, and Classical Pentecostal speakers have been particularly in evidence at charismatic conferences.

There are, however, some noteworthy differences between Classical Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism. A prominent feature of Classical Pentecostalism has been a strict moral code which has forbidden smoking, alcohol, dancing and participation in secular entertainments. This is frequently accompanied by a withdrawal from 'the world' and the attitude that the world order is evil and to be shunned. The Charismatic Movement provides a sharp contrast to this with its glad affirmation of the integral goodness of culture and creativity and its keen exploration of the arts. The strict moral code of Classical Pentecostalism is absent, and participants in the Charismatic Movement frequently speak of the need to break down the divide between the sacred and the secular. There are, moreover, significant theological differences. Compared with the dogmatic theology of Classical Pentecostalism, Neo-Pentecostalism's theology is multifarious. Classical Pentecostals have claimed that the Charismatic Movement's theology is nebulous and inconsistent. They express concern that Neo-Pentecostals emphasise an experience without major attention to belief and doctrine and that they unite people of differing theologies. This concern is most frequently expressed in relation to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. The authoritarian structures of some of the house church groupings also give rise to disquiet on the part of some Classical Pentecostals, and they generally join the non-Pentecostal denominations in their hesitations about the house church phenomenon.

The relationship between Classical Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism is basically an amicable and constructive one. But as theological diversity has increased and the Charismatic Movement has spread into widely differing church traditions, disquiet about aspects of theology and practice has correspondingly grown and is more frequently expressed.

Appendix IICULTURAL ATTRIBUTES OF NEO-PENTECOSTALISM

The Charismatic Movement does not have any distinctive subculture that sets it apart from other expressions of contemporary Christianity, but shares many of the features which characterise the cultural ethos of Evangelicalism. This is largely because of the influence which each has had on the other. The experience of charismatic renewal has, broadly speaking, brought people to a more evangelical theological position. Conversely, many evangelicals have become participants in the Charismatic Movement, and have brought the influences of the movement to bear upon Evangelicalism. Whilst certain features are worthy of mention with regard to the Charismatic Movement, it must therefore be noted that these are shared with a wider constituency.

A concern with lifestyle has, for many people, accompanied their charismatic renewal. This has not only been characterised by the popularity of whole foods and third world awareness which has permeated society as a whole, but by a careful examination of every area of life in the light of biblical teaching. The development of extended households and larger scale communities is indicative both of the seriousness with which charismatics have gone about this evaluation, and their readiness to make radical changes in response to it. A new awareness of social and political issues has also been in evidence, and there has been much talk of a 'renewal of structures' by means of Christian involvement and influence. The magazine Towards Renewal (later renamed Grassroots) was a pioneer of this concern with an area which has increasingly attracted the attention of charismatics. (See Jeanne Hinton (Ed.): Renewal: An Emerging Pattern. Celebration Publishing. 1980. for a representative collection of articles first published in Towards Renewal.)

A vital part of the typical approach of the Charismatic Movement here is the positive world view of the majority of its participants. The world order and human creativity is believed to be integrally good and God-given, and it is felt that if Christians work to destroy the influence of evil which

taints it, it can be used for God's immediate glory. This lies behind the exploration of the use of art forms in worship and evangelism - and indeed for sheer enjoyment. The concern to emphasise the value of the individual is linked with the same factor which has led to stress upon the 'every man ministry'- the belief that every human being has in them the potential for the realization of God-given talents and abilities. Just as the Holy Spirit wants to 'break into' the lives of Christians in a fresh and decisive way, so it is believed that He wishes to act in the world through Christians who are sensitive to His direction. The charismatics are, of course, by no means distinctive in this approach, but typify the increasing concern of Evangelicalism with matters which might once have been considered too worldly to merit the attention of all but a few.

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