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Proposals for the Development of Strategies, Including Workshops, to Advance Unity and Harmony Concerning Charismatic Gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Ethiopian Evangelical Church

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Doctor of Ministry Major Applied Project. 117.

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CONTENTS

TABLES	vii
PREFACE	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	x
ABBREVIATIONS	xi
ABSTRACT	xii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
PROJECT BACKGROUND	1
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH (EOC): THE BACKGROUND OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT IN ETHIOPIA.	2
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EECMY AND THE LUTHERAN MISSION IN ETHIOPIA.	4
THE HISTORY AND BACKGROUND THAT THE PROJECT ADDRESSES	8
PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT	15
Process By Which the Project Was Conducted	17
CHAPTER TWO	21
THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE	21
THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION	21
The Charismatic Movement in the EECMY.	21
The Charismatic Movement in the Bible	23
THE THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT	31
Biblical and Confessional Study: The Theological Challenges and Disputes Involved in the Charismatic Gifts of Holy Spirit in the EECMY.	31

The Role of the Holy Spirit in Mission	37
THE DOCTRINAL POSITION OF THE EECMY CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS.	41
CHAPTER THREE	54
RECENT RESEARCH	54
THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT	54
THE LITERATURE REVIEW	57
CHAPTER FOUR.....	63
THE PROJECT DEVELOPED	63
DESIGN OF THE STUDY.....	63
Tools and Methods of Data Collection.....	63
Methods of Data Analysis and Interpretation of Data.....	63
Key Responses.....	67
Research Tools and Methodology.....	69
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT.....	70
CHAPTER FIVE	73
THE PROJECT EVALUATED	73
A FINDINGS OF THE STUDY.....	73
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.....	73
5:2: Impact of Charismatic Gifts in EECMY	75
5.3. Understanding about Tongue Speaking and Baptism in the Holy Spirit in EECMY-SCES	77
Analysis of the Data in Light of the Project Hypothesis	78
5.4. Consistence of Charismatic Movement with Bible and Lutheran teaching in EECMY-SCES	79

5.5. Understanding Special Signs and Wonders in EECMY-SCES.....	81
5.6. Challenges the Church Facing Related with Usage of Charismatic Gifts.....	83
5.7. SWOT Analysis Related with Charismatic Gifts of the Holy Spirit in EECMY-SCES.....	87
WORK ON FOR UNITY AND HARMONY WITH IN EECMY	88
The Strategies developed to handle pastorally the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit to create unity and harmony in the EECMY	91
How the EECMY Pastorally Handles the Challenge of the Charismatic Gifts of the Holy Spirit	93
CHAPTER SIX.....	97
SUMMARY & CONCLUSION.....	97
CONTRIBUTION TO THE MINISTRY	97
CONTRIBUTION TO PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH.....	99
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	100
Recommended Guidelines for Congregations and Pastors.....	101
APPENDIX ONE.....	107
COPY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.....	107
APPENDIX TWO.....	112
WORKSHOP OUTLINE.....	112
INTRODUCTION	112
THE FIVE GIFTS-OFFICES FROM OUR ASCENDED LORD	113
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	119

MAP 1

Sidama Administrative Map And Work Area of SCES.



TABLES

Table 1. The EECMY Membership Statistics for 2016

Sr. No	Church Unit	Congregations	Preaching Places	Pastors	Evangelists	Volunteers	Members	Communicants
1	AAS	26	13	36	56	3958	16671	11423
2	ABS	146	53	86	441	7439	284151	129184
3	ADS	150	17	48	32	5115	154672	68330
4	AS	163	106	31	103	9939	151800	72506
5	BDS	239	8	122	11	4283	280617	145895
6	BGS	138	38	61	81	7000	61714	46383
7	CES	476	576	576	462	28740	667906	465248
8	CGS	227	93	211	202	50194	302348	137329
9	CS	529	210	380	484	106954	1033165	439185
10	EGBS	169	334	32	53	2415	104656	66690
11	GAP	48	25	15	20	1630	52276	21272
12	GJS	369	92	101	105	20321	329183	168597
13	IBS	460	239	354	128	26030	368939	220066
14	JBS	126	126	71	153	2703	60306	23614
15	NCES	21	31	13	19	1620	8031	5808
16	NEAW-G	3	6	3	8	136	941	440
17	NEAW-T	2	10	2	15	170	1338	1256
18	SCES	1364	104	189	1249	70040	1054918	616458
19	SCS	375	197	186	784	27594	241454	272680
20	SES	1037	370	128	400	19990	632560	239670
21	SS	310	265	52	164	39109	274579	147139
22	SWBS	215	154	168	178	137497	419757	282152
23	SWS	704	332	378	1132	82030	445187	299445
24	WBS	108	119	45	125	3572	58308	30740
25	WGBS	135	98	84	205	8844	119462	85191
26	WGS	154	20	128	504	26348	543876	317668
27	WS	435	128	238	253	7165	320657	139638
28	WWBS	435	128	238	253	7110	320657	139638
Total		8564	3892	3976	7620	707946	8310129	4593645

PREFACE

I have been serving in the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus /South Central Ethiopian Mission (EECMY/SCES) as president since 2008. I have faced many ministry challenges during my ministry period. This project addresses one of those challenges: the role and function of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how differing views about these gifts can cause divisions in the church. The EECMY is the largest Lutheran church in Africa. Its membership is more than 8.35 million. It was established as a national church on January 21, 1959. At that time, there were only twenty thousand members, and it is still a fast-growing church. One of the important developments in the church life during the past decades has been the rapid spread of the charismatic movement within the church. In 1963, experiences and practices usually associated only with the charismatic movement were occurring with increasing frequency, also in the EECMY. By 1975, it was apparent that this movement had also spread to some pastors, evangelists, and elders in the congregations of EECMY.

There are many books written on the person and work of Holy Spirit and about charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. Also, there are many official publications which are useful for any pastor or theologian who wants to know what the Bible teaches regarding claims to the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. By appealing solely to Scripture, many writers present proof after proof of the real purpose of the gifts of prophecy, speaking in tongues, etc. But these books are unable to solve the problem of disunity in the church caused by the experience of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit in the church. They do not reflect the diversity of views among believers on the issue of charismatic gifts in my own context in Ethiopia. Therefore, my field research explores the diversity of views of the gift of and gifts of the Holy Spirit among members and leaders of the

EECMY, so we can better teach and promote unity and harmony within our churches. The goal of this Major Applied Project is to help believers recognize and more actively seek what the Holy Spirit brings now and create unity and harmony among believers. This will serve as a contribution by describing the biblical and theological facts about charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit and create dialogue between those who claim the experience of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit and those who do not experience the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the same way. The aim of this study is to help define and describe the biblical understanding of the experience of the Holy Spirit today and the understanding of believers in Ethiopia about this issue. The development of strategies that help toward the unity of the church will most likely aid in the development of use of workshops which will help Ethiopian Lutherans have more unity and harmony.

The description and summary of this project will hopefully be used by the leaders of EECMY. It will help pastors, evangelists, and church leaders by creating awareness and providing theological understanding about charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people whose support and encouragement has been great during my work on this valuable project and throughout my participation in the Doctor of Ministry program at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

First of all, I would like to thank the informants of this Major Applied Project. Without their contributions, I would not be able to write what I believe to be an important Major Applied Project.

I would like to thank the faculty of Concordia Seminary. Special thanks go to Dr. David Peter and Dr. Wally Becker who helped me to go through my study.

Special thanks to Dr. Bruce Hartung, my Advisor to this project, and also the same gratitude goes to Dr. Beth Hoeltke, the Director of the Graduate School, who helped me by reading my project and gave me constructive comments. Using her input this research and writing has become fruitful. And also my thanks goes to those who helped in editing my MAP. They have made great contributions to finalize the project.

I would like to thank Craig Olson who is my financial Sponsor and covered all my travel and educational costs, and I wish him all God's blessing.

Special thanks also goes to my wife Zelalem Yohannes who helped me by encouraging, keeping the family during my absence and, moreover, for her earnest prayer.

At the last not least, I would like to thank God who helped me to start and finish my study. I wish God's blessing for all who helped me by praying for me as I am working on my MAP.

ABREVIATIONS

ALC	American Lutheran Church
ALM	American Lutheran Mission
AUPM	American United Presbyterian Mission
DEM	Danish Evangelical Mission
DLM	Danish Lutheran Mission
ECC	Ethiopian Catholic Church
EECMY	Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
EOC	Ethiopian Orthodox Church
FFFM	Finish Free Foreign Mission
GHM	German Hermannsburg Mission
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MYS	Mekane Yesus Seminary
NLM	Norwegian Lutheran Mission
NMS	Norwegian Missionary Society
SEM	Swedish Evangelical Mission
SCES	South Central Ethiopia Mission
SIM	Serving in Mission previously “Sudan Interior Mission”

ABSTRACT

Bulaka, Hailu Yohannes “A Proposal for the Implementation of Workshops and Other Strategies That Will Advance Unity and Harmony Concerning Charismatic Gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.” Doctor of Ministry. Major Applied Project, Concordia Seminary, 2017. 122 pp.

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) is the largest Lutheran Church in Africa with 8.35 million members, which proclaims the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ. The church is experiencing what many see as the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. This sometimes causes conflict and division among members. For our unity and harmony in the church, we should avoid an attitude of spiritual superiority which makes the members of the congregation who are not charismatic feel they are inferior Christians. The church’s emphasis should be on the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. At the same time, the work of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit’s gifts need to be respected and utilized constructively in the church. My project deals with the gifts of the Holy Spirit by emphasizing the unity and harmony of the church. In the EECMY, the experience, use, and identification of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit can and sometimes does affect the unity and harmony of the church.

In facing the issues raised by the charismatic movement within the EECMY, we should seek the edification and spiritual welfare of the whole body of Christ. All pastors and laymen should earnestly and prayerfully study Scripture and its exposition in the Lutheran Confessions. Through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, we will be able to discern between what is true and sound teaching and what is false; what is God's will and what is of man. Subjective experience and human emotions are never safe guides in spiritual matters. Our true guide is the Word of God. Where God's Word speaks, Christians will submit in all humility and in the fear of God and not follow personal experience.

My project, to “A proposal and strategy for the implementation of workshops that will advance unity and harmony concerning charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus,” is meant to contribute to teaching the church leaders to keep Biblical and confessional truth, and to enhance the church growth for the glory of God. By this research, I am attempting to clarify how the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are to be approached and used, and thus to describe how these gifts can bring unity and not be divisive. The MAP addresses these challenges: the role and function of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, how differing views about these gifts can cause divisions in the EECMY, and to develop the strategies and prepare workshops to create unity and harmony in the Church. Thus, my research lays a foundation about the use of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit through the study of the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Project Background

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) is a Lutheran Church body in Ethiopia. It is a very fast growing and the largest Lutheran Church in Africa. Members of the church are experiencing the gifts of Holy Spirit in ways that contribute to this significant growth. EECMY has a sound Lutheran and confessional teaching and style of worship grounded in the historic liturgy of the Church. But the experience, use, and identification of the gifts of the Holy Spirit can and sometimes does affect unity of the church. The Charismatic Movement has had some history in Ethiopia. “A charismatic renewal began in Ethiopia in 1963 and was strongest among students, especially university students. They met in informal groups, which were not integrated in any of the established churches. Evangelization was a hallmark of the movement from its beginning. The groups grew and multiplied and soon started to send out evangelists supported by the young believers.”¹

One of the significant developments in Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) during the past decade has been the rapid spread of the charismatic movement. In the early twenty-first century, experiences and practices usually associated only with Pentecostal denominations began to appear in Ethiopia with increasing frequency. During the past two decades a number of EECMY pastors and people have become involved in the charismatic

¹ Johnny Bakke, *Christian Ministry: Patterns & Functions within the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus* (Oslo: Solum Forlag, 1987), 251.

movement. It is clear that this movement and its practices has spread to other pastors and congregations of EECMY as well. Thereafter, the movement continued to spread within the church body. Tensions and divisions over charismatic movement practice appeared in various areas of my Synod—SCES. “Some of the charismatic youths had EECMY background. A few congregations welcomed the renewal and made it possible for the youths to remain effective members of their own church. More often the influence of the charismatic youths resulted in opposition from the older members and the leadership of the congregations.”² In certain areas of the church, tensions and divisions had arisen over charismatic experience such as speaking in tongues, miraculous healings, prophecy, and the claimed possession of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit in many parts the church structure.

A Brief History of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC): The Background of the Charismatic Movement in Ethiopia.

The history of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church dates back to the Book of Acts. Acts 8:26–40 records that the evangelist Philip converted to Christianity a eunuch, the treasurer of Queen Candace of Ethiopia. The treasurer had traveled to Jerusalem to worship the God of Israel. On his way back home, he encountered Philip, whom God had sent to proclaim the Gospel to him. Upon confessing Christ as his savior, the royal treasurer was baptized by Philip. According to the Ethiopian tradition, the treasurer returned home in AD 34 and evangelized his people. He also opened chapels for worship. According to Lule Melaku, the royal treasurer was the first to bring Christianity to Ethiopia.³ In the fourth century, Rufinus⁴ wrote the romantic story describing how

² Bakke, *Christian Ministry*, 252.

³ Lule Melaku, *History of Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Part I* (Addis Ababa: Tsedenia, 2008), 45.

⁴ Melaku, *History of Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church*, 45–47.

Christianity was brought to Axum by Frumentius and Aedesius. The authenticity of Frumentius and Aedesius's story is supported by archeological evidence, which seems to show that the young king at the time was Ezana, the Son of Ella Amida, a person who began his rule as a pagan but in his later years had the cross stamped on the coins of his realm. The king died young, leaving behind his wife and his sons Ezana and Saizana to rule his kingdom. Although they were heirs to the throne, Ezana and Saizana were too young to succeed their father. Consequently, their mother, the Queen, begged Frumentius and Aedesius to remain in Ethiopia to help her administer the kingdom until her sons reached maturity and were able to rule.

Frumentius and Aedesius accepted the Queen's invitation and stayed in Axum, where they faithfully carried out their commission. According to Sergew Selassie, in addition to helping govern the country, Frumentius and Aedesius brought up the children and taught them the Christian faith. The missionaries built a place of prayer for the princes, where the children were taught to sing psalms and hymns.⁵ Later, the same source tells us that the names of the two brothers were Atsbeha (Ezana) and Abraha (Saezana). (Atsbeha means "he brought the dawn," Abraha means "he illuminated.>"). Atsbeha and Abraha were converted to Christianity in AD 330.

The so-called "Nine Saints" also play a prominent role in Ethiopian history. Arriving near the end of the fifth century (AD 479), they seem to have been learned monks who migrated from different places in the Roman Empire. At least some of them were Syriac or Aramaic speakers.⁶ These saints intended to accomplish two main objectives: to consolidate the moral life among the Christians and to convert and baptize the non-Christians of the country. The first objective was

⁵ Sergew Hable Sellasie, *Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History to 1270* (Addis Ababa: United Printers, 1972), 42.

⁶ M. Geddes, *The Church History of Ethiopia* (London, 1696). Quoted in teaching material of Mekane Yesus Seminary College of Distance Education- Ethiopian Church History (EOC & EECMY) (Addis Ababa: Jan. 2014).7.

achieved during their stay at Axum, and the second was fulfilled when they left Axum and moved to the countryside. Their work was the starting point of the expansion of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

A Brief History of the EECMY and the Lutheran Mission in Ethiopia.

The EECMY is a national Lutheran Church with its own remarkable history going back to the seventeenth century when Peter Heyling, a Lutheran missionary from Germany, arrived in Ethiopia in 1634 and, for a short period, began evangelical work within the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC). This pioneer missionary helped lay the foundation for later missionary work in Ethiopia. In the eighteenth century, a great evangelical revival took place in the British Isles. This revival emphasized the transformation of the individual through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.⁷ Believers were urged to deny self, dedicate their lives to serve others, and to win them for Christ. The revival resulted in bringing about social reform and initiating new mission societies dedicated to bringing the Gospel to those who had never heard the good news.⁸

Initially, it was not the intention of those newly formed mission societies to plant new churches on Ethiopian soil, but rather to aid the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) in carrying out its mission. In order to revitalize ancient churches like the EOC, the Protestant mission societies planned to distribute Christian literature and Bibles in the local language of the people. However, when cooperation between the new converts and the structures of the EOC became difficult, the Protestant societies felt compelled to plant a denominational church.⁹ Lutheran missionaries eventually established Lutheran congregations and meetings among the leaders of

⁷ Gustiv Aren, *Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia: Origins of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (Studia missionalia Upsaliensia)* (Stockholm: Epsforlaget, 1978), 45.

⁸ Aren, *Evangelical Pioneers*, 45.

⁹ Aren, *Evangelical Pioneers*, 46.

these congregations, and a consensus was reached to form an Ethiopian Protestant National Church.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, pietistic and Moravian ideas entered the country and helped bring revival to the church. These ideas stressed individual conversion and increased lay influence. The pietistic and the Moravian movements had a positive influence on many believers and led them to read the Bible with interest and promote the formation of cell groups in which Bible study and group prayer took place.¹⁰ Together these events helped lead to the establishment of a national church. The draft of a constitution was articulated and a general assembly was called for the formation of the new church. Eventually, delegates representing the twenty thousand Lutherans in Ethiopia gathered and approved the draft constitution, founding a national Lutheran church known as “The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus” (EECMY) on January 21, 1959.

The mission organizations that played significant roles in the establishment of the EECMY were the Sweden Evangelical Mission (SEM), the German Hermannsburg Mission (GHM), the Norwegian Mission (NLM), the Danish Evangelical Mission (DEM), the American Lutheran Mission (ALM), and the American Presbyterian Church, which joined at a later date.

The first group of missionaries from Sweden arrived in 1861. The evangelistic and church planting efforts of the Swedes were confined to the northern part of the country. Under the leadership of Hermann Bahlburg, missionaries from the Hermannsburg Mission in Germany (GHM) arrived in Ethiopia on December 30, 1927. “The GHM has been known as a mission organization with a high regard for the Lutheran heritage. Its strict confessional stand is emphasized. A dominant position is given to the preaching of the Word of God. It is through the

¹⁰ Aren, *Evangelical Pioneers*, 115.

preached Word that men are called to become members of the assembly of all believers and to volunteer for mission work at home and abroad.”¹¹ They were to play an important role in the founding of the Ethiopian Lutheran Church. Heeding the request of the SEM, “The Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM) grew out of evangelical revivals within the Church of Sweden. The revivals had been influenced by both pietist and Moravian ideas. The need of individual conversion and the responsibility of each believer as a priest before God were stressed.”¹² The Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM) sent missionaries formerly stationed in China to the mission field in Ethiopia. Arriving in 1948, the Norwegians started work in the former Sidamo and Gamo Gofa Provinces in 1949. “The Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM) began its work in Ethiopia as late as 1948, but a brief look into the early history of the mission is necessary in order to understand some of the issues which at times appeared strange in the eyes of the other Lutheran missions in Ethiopia.”¹³ By 1953, there were more than three thousand members in the congregations in Sidamo. The Danish Evangelical Mission (DEM) also arrived in Ethiopia in 1948, inaugurating mission work in Dodola, Bale Province, after securing permission from the Ethiopian government. The Danish missionaries laid the foundation for the later work of the EECMY in the southwestern part of the country, a predominantly Muslim area. The coming of the American Lutheran Mission (ALM) to Ethiopia in 1957 was unique in that the request to evangelize in the ancient land was extended by the Crown Prince of Ethiopia. The ALM started work in the province of Wollo in northern Ethiopia and laid there the foundation for future mission work in the north.

The mission societies that came to Ethiopia, such as CMS, SEM, GHM, AUPM, SIM,

¹¹ Bakke, *Christian Ministry*, 98.

¹² Bakke, *Christian Ministry*, 98.

¹³ Bakke, *Christian Ministry*, 101.

SMBW, with the exception of the NLM, DLM, and ALM,¹⁴ all entered Ethiopia before the 1930s. “The missions had been organized to proclaim the good news, preferably to those who had not previously heard it. It was obvious that they had been formed in contexts and milieus that had few similarities with those they encountered in Ethiopia.”¹⁵ The mission societies eventually established Lutheran congregations in various parts of the country. CMS, SEM, and SMBW started their mission work in the northern part of Ethiopia. SEM, GHM, and AUPM started their mission work in the Western part of Ethiopia among the Oromo and other people. SIM, DLM, and NLM began their mission work among the Sidama, Kambata, Wallayta, Bale, Gamo, and other ethnic groups in the south. According to EECMY strategic plan report: “The mission organizations that played significant roles in the establishment of the EECMY are the Sweden Evangelical Mission (SEM), the German Hermannsburg Mission (GHM), the Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM), the Danish Evangelical Mission (DEM), the American Lutheran Mission (ALM), and the American Presbyterian Church, who joined this mission initiative at later days.”¹⁶ The different missionaries eventually ended up establishing Lutheran congregations in different parts of the Ethiopia.

Bakke describes the developing national church as follows: “The integration of church and mission in Ethiopia might be described as an indigenization of the mission work. It had as a natural consequences that the EECMY took over the administration of medical, social and educational program which until then had been run by the missions.”¹⁷ Some of the mission organizations were not convinced about complete integration with EECMY. So there were many

¹⁴ See *Abbreviations*, xiv-xv.

¹⁵ Bakke, *Christian Ministry*, 94.

¹⁶ EECMY Draft Strategic Report (2013–2017) prepared by SAZ Professional Management Consultancy, Training & Research PLC, Addis Ababa (April 2012), 3.

¹⁷ Bakke, *Christian Ministry*, 224.

discussions and consultations to form one Lutheran national Church in Ethiopia. Now this church body is the fastest growing Lutheran church in the world with twenty-nine synods, with 8.35 million members, of which 65% are between at the age of 18-35 as of the writing of this MAP.

The History and Background that the Project Addresses

Because of both the geographical and founding diversity, my study focused on learning the views of representative of Lutheran charismatics in Ethiopia and addressing some aspects of the charismatic movement that are a cause for misunderstanding and disunity in the church. For example, one EECMY pastor who is experiencing the charismatic movement says that it was obvious to him that his own ministry lacked the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit before his new experience. The church believes that salvation comes through Holy Baptism. “Our Churches teach that Baptism is necessary for salvation, that the grace of God is offered through Baptism, and that children should be Baptized, for being offered to God through Baptism they are received into his grace.”¹⁸ Certainly souls had been saved through the preaching and teaching of the gospel in the EECMY, but he asks, “What about the other works that Jesus did in the time of the New Testament?”

There are several factors that in particular have been instrumental in the rapid growth of charismatic movement in EECMY:

1. Historical and sociological factors play a significant role in this movement. According to Ethiopian society, the cultural network of friendship, kinship, and other social ties that unites ministers, leaders, evangelists, and people enables them to reach all level of people in society. In addition, since the new government has declared religious freedom in Ethiopia, working

¹⁸ Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1959), 33.

conditions have improved for churches. The EECMY is continuously experiencing growth and expansion. This has created a new challenge for church leadership in relation to charismatic movement. People have face-to-face contact along lines of pre-existing important social relationships which is influenced by the powerful sense of commitment that grows out of a change in behavior such as the practice of speaking in tongues in the church.

Along with social structures, historical-political events shape the Ethiopian view. The charismatics are encouraged to show a boldness of Spirit to promote the Lord's work, as in preaching the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ. The movement has been deeply rooted in Ethiopia during the time of the communist regime — a psychology of persecution can lead to prayer and which, in turn, creates unity and harmony among EECMY congregations. In the EECMY, no single authoritative theological interpretation has emerged that is commonly accepted by all charismatics in the church.

Church history is also a key factor. In the early history of the church as it is written in the book of Acts, the charismatic experience that happened at a definite moment, usually speaking in tongues and the different gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the book are given to the church also today. The gifts are extraordinary faith, power to witness to Jesus Christ, miraculous healing, speaking in tongues, the interpretation of tongues, prophecy, exorcism, and others. Scripture alone should determine the nature, purpose, and exercise of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, according to the book of Acts, those who came to faith in Jesus Christ were baptized with water. Then in a succeeding step they expected also to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. “On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and

prophesied.” (Acts 19:5–6). Repentance, faith, water baptism, and baptism in the Holy Spirit was considered as a normal sequence of events. Yet, According to EECMY understanding a person is saved only by faith in Jesus Christ as his personal savior from sin and the Holy Spirit is the one who creates faith not because of any special experience of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. God will bless any congregation of EECMY that gives Christ the highest loyalty to his word and allows the Holy Spirit the freedom to move in the lives of its members as he wills. God will never provide his full blessing upon any congregation that places human traditions above his Holy Word and does not permit the Holy Spirit to freely move in and among the members of the congregation.

2. The identification and use of spiritual gifts is another area of division. The gift of healing is one of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit by which God reveals his power to the world and to his church and it is one of God's ways of confirming the truth of the Christian message. Healing ministry, which was very evident in the ministry of Jesus as well as in the apostolic church, is a gift of the Holy Spirit that is still evident among EECMY congregations today.

In the early church, another manifestation of the charismatic gifts of Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues, which was considered as an act of spiritual devotion “For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit” (1 Cor. 14:2). According to the Bible as one worships God in tongues, his mind is at rest and his Spirit prays, unhindered by the limitations of human understanding (1 Cor. 14:14). The worshiper communes with God even though he/she does not understand with the mind what he/she is saying.

Those who have experienced praying in tongues in EECMY congregations have explained to the author that it is a power that the risen Christ gives members of his church to express the

inexpressible and to praise God in new speech. According to EECMY, speaking in tongue is a gift of the Holy Spirit that we should neither speak without respect nor discouraged it. It is to bring about unity and harmony in the church. According to the Bible, to despise or even to take lightly a gift of the Holy Spirit is to put oneself in spiritual danger. One might think that the church should prohibit speaking in tongues in order to preserve unity in the church. However, even if one's goal is to establish unity and harmony in the church, one should never despise the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit.

While these gifts are an outward sign, it is not correct to identify the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit with emotionalism, or as a result of one's wrestling or because one has reached a certain stage of holiness or spirituality; it is a gift offered by grace to both the strong and the weak in faith. Just as a child of God may receive any other gift(s), the Lord gives him the Holy Spirit as a gift; he is then "born of the spirit" (John 3:5-6). The Holy Spirit is allowed to express himself more fully in and through the Christian's life as the gifts are expressed in the worship. There are, however, different opinions among EECMY members with respect to the way charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are to be received. Some have listed specific steps that are to be followed in the process of receiving charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit; for example, the desire for gifts of the Holy Spirit, an earnest effort to surrender one's will to Jesus Christ in all areas of life, strong prayer for the gift, receiving the gift by faith, thanking God for granting the gifts, and releasing the Spirit by praising the Lord in tongue.

This focus on deeds has shifted the Biblical foundation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. So although the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are sometimes described by its followers as fostering the unity of the members in the congregations through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the fact remains that neo-Pentecostal theology creates a distinction between Spirit-baptized

Christians and other Christians, which creates disharmony and disunity within the congregations because some see themselves as having moved to a higher level of spirituality. This leads not only to inequality but criticism of other believers and even church leaders. Some leaders are said to be “dry ones” and in need of being filled with the Holy Spirit. For that reason, many believers are filled with doubt concerning their salvation and are unable to witness about Jesus Christ.

According to the charismatic movement, spiritual dryness is the absence of manifesting outward emotions such as shouting, jumping, roaring, shaking, and many other actions.

According to 1 Cor. 14:14, “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.”

In other words, the worshiper may have a clear sense of communion with God even though he does not understand with the mind. It is also my observation that the people shouting and jumping saying, “Hallelujah” and “Amen” do so without understanding their meaning with the mind. As a point of dispute, EECMY believes that receiving Jesus as one’s personal savior and Lord and receiving the Holy Spirit occurs at the same time, while most charismatics profess that believing in Jesus Christ and being filled with the Holy Spirit occur separately.

Along with divisive comparison, charismatics go beyond Scripture in their embracing of and reliance on the gift of prophecy. There is evidence that the gift of prophecy exists in the church today even as in apostolic times among EECMY congregations. It is also clear that God still speaks directly to his children, communicating to them information to guide and direct them in a given situation in temporal matters. Yet, the idea that God is still revealing new truths beyond those revealed in Scripture leads many to turn to self-proclaimed prophets for new revelations before and even instead of Scripture. Some charismatics in the church say that this the prophetic voice of God comes, not in connection with the sacraments nor with hearing the written word of God but at times of prayer God speaks directly to his children. It is part of a

point of dispute against the false teachers who focus on external revelation outside the Scripture that the EECMY focuses on the Holy Scripture to hear God's Word for teaching and for the ministry of evangelistic outreach and mission within the country and beyond.

3. A third area of concern is consistent leadership. It is EECMY policy that the pastor and elders of the church should prayerfully, carefully, and evangelically govern the use and correct any abuse of all spiritual gifts in the life of the church according to the word of God in the local congregations and speaking in tongues should not be divisive. The cause of divisions in the church is always to be found in the ignorance and sinfulness of human being. To create unity and harmony among the members of the church is the work of God, but to create divisions and hatred is work of Satan. To create unity and harmony among the members of a congregation there should be no pressure to seek charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit nor be made to feel inferior because he/she does not experience such gifts.

These issues lead to questions of how best to use the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit in EECMY, especially in the South Central Ethiopia Synod (SCES) of the church where I am responsible for leadership. How can these gifts be used in healthy and God-pleasing ways and, how, additionally can we approach pastorally those experiencing the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. These problems are both ministry challenge and are central challenges for me as the President of the SCES. So my MAP clearly address these challenges.

The charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are an expression that occurs in the passages of the New Testament. Scripture is also very clear regarding the meaning of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit in the early church. According to the Bible, believers in Jesus were given the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are given for the edification of the congregations. Nowhere in the Bible is the gift of the Spirit given to individuals in separation

from the community of Christians. But we observe that there is division and sometimes conflict among EECMY congregations because of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. “Church leaders felt threatened by the youths. Charismatic Christians in the non-Pentecostal churches were quite often reluctant to submit to the authority of the elected elders, who feared that the youths would take over and destroy the congregations, since they insisted that everything should be done in their way. The youths on their part accused the leaders of spiritual dryness, lack of personal holiness, desire of power, etc.”¹⁹ It is through the Holy Spirit that we serve God and one another and overcome the temptations that arise in our lives. The Holy Spirit transforms and empowers the whole life and outlook of those who receive Him, gives birth to the community of the church, and enables that church to proclaim the Word with boldness in the country and beyond.

The major problem in the EECMY today is that the unique experience and major emphasis of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit among the members of the congregations. It is, therefore, very important to understand what the Scriptures say about charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit and how we bring about the unity and harmony in and among the EECMY congregations. EECMY charismatics claim that their theological views supplement rather than contradict traditional EECMY doctrine. To create unity and harmony in the church, that claim can be properly evaluated only on the basis of what the Bible teaches about gifts of the Holy Spirit. We shall first examine the Biblical teaching on the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, then summarize what the Scriptures teach concerning the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament, one of the most important guiding sections on the nature and purpose of Spiritual gifts is 1 Corinthians 12–14. I shall not attempt to reconstruct the total problem that troubled the church at Corinth with respect to charismatic gifts, nor shall I seek to review the questions that

¹⁹ Bakke, *Christian Minister*, 252.

may have been asked by the congregation. Instead I shall note some of the basic guidelines that Paul gives in these chapters regarding spiritual gifts. Finally, in this document, I will discuss whether the Scriptures promise extraordinary charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit to the church also today.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to develop proposal and strategy for the implementation to develop workshops that will advance unity and harmony concerning charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit in the EECMY. These workshops will, with the help of the Holy Spirit, enhance the usefulness of charismatic gifts for church growth and to create a workshop curriculum concerning how the EECMY can pastorally make approaches towards the charismatic movement. The goal of this project is to make a contribution toward having unity and harmony by developing strategies that will include the creation of a workshop that will help. At the end of my MAP, I develop strategies which can have impact on church leaders and members of the church to advance harmony and unity regarding the use of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit.

As I am leader of the Synod, I face the challenge of tension and even division in the congregations due to charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit.

To a large extent the tensions remain. Many of the renewal people feel that they are still discriminated against by the EECMY leaders. But the very fact that a number of them belong to the EECMY ministry and leadership supports the notion that the various initiatives of reconciliations have already fostered a better understanding. It is yet to be seen what the final outcome of this new influence will be in respect of further improvement and nurturing of the EECMY ministry.²⁰

It is very important to develop the teaching guidelines materials and develop a proposal and strategy for the implementation by teaching the pastors, evangelists and elders of the

²⁰ Bakke, *Christian Minister*, 254.

congregations on how to bring unity and harmony in the church. It is also to clarify how the gifts are to be approached and used and, therefore, how these gifts become helpful to unity not divisive of the church. It is also the goal of the project to see people to have the right ideas but even more important is that there is some flexibility as to the gifts of the Holy Spirit and therefore, there is a need to have the different gifts be harmonious, not necessarily the same but in tune with each other.

The general goal of this project is to offer clarity where there is confusion in the church, to make a bridge where there is division among the believers, and to affirm the ongoing value and challenge of the renewal movement of EECMY. The history of the church is led by the Holy Spirit. "A theory of church history formulated in terms of the organic development of the Church cannot simply explain the decisions and development of the empirical church by assuming that the Holy Spirit has led the church."²¹ The church is organic and has its growth and so the desired outcome of the project would be:

To assess through field research the current general attitudes and understanding of leaders and others in the EECMY concerning the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

To enable church leaders and pastors to both fight against false teaching concerning charismatic gifts and to appreciate and utilize positively those true gifts of the Holy Spirit by developing recommendations and strategies for pastoral care and by creating and offering workshops on this topic.

To develop teaching materials and train leaders of the Synod so that they may offer workshops with the hope of bringing attitudinal and behavioral change among leaders of the South Central Ethiopia Synod concerning the understanding of charismatic gifts and their function and use.

A central question for our discussion is whether the Lord has promised to provide to the church charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit today in the same manner that He gave the gifts to the early church, enabling believers to perform miracles, heal the sick, cast out demons, raise the

²¹ Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 342.

dead, prophesy, or speak in tongues. We will examine the events recorded in Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19 to determine if these events are to be interpreted only as historical happenings that occurred in apostolic times, or if these events continue in the church today and in future generations.

These stories are presented by Luke as historical accounts and are difficult to read as promises also to future generations. The EECMY traditionally has interpreted them as experiences that occurred only in the apostolic church, but now we experience the reality in the life of EECMY congregations today. Whether the gifts of the Holy Spirit recorded in the Bible are gifts for all time or just for the Apostolic Age constitutes one of the greatest disputes today. There is no clear evidence that many important persons mentioned in the Book of Acts as believers in Jesus, performing effective work in the Kingdom, possessed the gift of tongues or of healing. The EECMY must, therefore, be careful not to place too much emphasis on any one of these gifts among its congregations just to keep unity and harmony.

Process By Which the Project Was Conducted

Both bibliographic research concerning the gifts of the Holy Spirit and field research concerning the views, attitudes, and beliefs of pastors and laypersons concerning use of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit were accessed and utilized.

I prepared the relevant questionnaire to be administered by trained evangelists that will be given to key leaders. Additionally, trained evangelists and at least twenty-five key leaders who have charismatic experience within the Church were interviewed. On the basis of the combination of the bibliographic research and the responses to the questionnaires and the interviews, a proposal for the implementation of workshops will be created as well as a curriculum for the workshop. The process will then be to train thirty to forty leaders of the church who have at least ten years experience in congregational ministry. The trained leaders

will organize and teach the workshops using the curriculum developed.

The truth of the Bible and its teachings about the person and work of Holy Spirit, as well as the truth of the Lutheran Confessions as faithful interpretations of the Word of God are presupposed. The Confessions explain well the charismatic gifts of Holy Spirit. Martin Luther explained the 3rd article of the creed,

I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church he daily and abundantly forgives all my sins, and the sins of all believers, and one the last day he will raise me and all the dead and will grant eternal life to me and to all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true.²²

The Lutheran teaching of *Sola Scriptura*, one of the Reformation's three main theological principles, along with *Sola Gratia* and *Sola Fide*, demands that no extra biblical consideration enter in to the exegesis of a biblical passage to judge or mitigate its intended meaning. It was also presupposed that gifts of the Holy Spirit are for unity of the church but not for division.

God is almighty and He is Love. He gives the gift of Love to believers through the person and work of Holy Spirit. This principle guides the present research into the charismatic gifts of Holy Spirit which is given to build the church and to fulfill God's mission through Evangelistic outreach in the country and beyond. The charismatic movements are claimed today by many Christians in main-line denominations, including the EECMY, as well as in traditional Pentecostal groups in Ethiopia.

It was also my presupposition that there can be no question that God has used this movement to bring blessing to many Christians and help the church to fulfill His mission and for

²² Tappert. *Book of Concord*, 345.

fast growth of the Church. “God is alive and well and that Christianity is currently growing rapidly around the world in forms that emphasize the Holy Spirit. Let this fact be a call for traditional word-oriented Protestants to seek new ways to open themselves to the Spirit’s renewing influence today.”²³ In the case of EECMY, there was explosive growth in membership but lack of discipleship training and follow-up of new members. Structural weakness arose in regard to addressing the conflicts arising within the context of the church due to the use of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. In addition to this, many Christians testify to having experienced a new liberty and love through charismatic gifts of Holy Spirit, an inward release from the bondage of inhibitions, and an overflowing joy and peace in believing in Jesus Christ. And it was also my presupposition that I have stronger sense of the reality of God, warmth of Christian fellowship unknown before, and strong zeal for mission and Evangelistic outreach. The Bible affirms God’s revelation. “However, Scripture and the direct revelation of God are related in the sense that Scripture affirms revelation.”²⁴ So I hope my study may serve as a contribution which is helpful for pastors, Evangelists and church leaders to a biblical understanding and experience of the gifts of the Holy Spirit today.

In this research, my primary objective is to develop a pedagogical set of guidelines to clarify how the EECMY should approach the biblical teaching on the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit for the sake of the church’s unity in confession and mission. I will try to distinguish more clearly “gift of the Holy Spirit” (Sg.) and “gifts of the Holy Spirit” (Pl.). The singular “gift” refers to the Holy Spirit Himself, and the plural “gifts” refers to the manifestation of the Holy

²³ David S. Luecke, *Your Encounters with The Holy Spirit Name and Share Them—Seek More* (Bloomington, IN: WestBow, 1984), 12.

²⁴ Carter Lindberg, *The Third Reformation? Charismatic Movements and the Lutheran Tradition* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983), 81.

Spirit. The “gift” deals with what believers have in common and highlights the unity among members of the church, the “gifts” deals with what believers have in distinction from one another and emphasizes the diversity among the members of the congregation. Thus, I seek to explore how to bring unity and harmony in the church by setting the strategy and curriculum for training.

In this research, I focus along lines of a Lutheran theology of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and on a general approach to the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit as the main strategy. In developing pedagogical guidelines, I consider the important themes that arise in some of the sources consulted. I also consider the African, non-Western Christian contribution to the growth of the church in Ethiopia and beyond. My focus is on the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit rather than the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

In this regard, my MAP is not focused on developing a complete treatise on the Holy Spirit. Rather, my focus is on ways that the unity of the EECMY can be strengthened and sustained. In the case of the EECMY, the use and identification of the gifts of the Holy Spirit can and sometimes does affect the unity of the church. This potential division needs to be addressed. I will attempt to clarify how the gifts are to be approached and used. I will also develop strategies to do so, that these gifts may aid church’s unity and harmony, as well as church growth.

CHAPTER TWO

THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Biblical Foundation

The Charismatic Movement in the EECMY.

The mission statement of the EECMY is: “To connect people to Christ through the proclamation of the Gospel so that the church becomes an embodiment of God’s love in holistic service to the world, planting congregations, empowering ministers, nurturing believers, and making disciples in Ethiopia and beyond.”¹ This mission statement exists to proclaim, teach, and empower the members of the church. Various evangelistic and church growth efforts throughout the EECMY in recent years have given attention to the place of “spiritual gifts” in the life and growth of the church and have sought to help people identify and use such gifts. The vision of the EECMY is: “To see a spiritually vibrant, resource-wise sustainable, missionary passionate church”² The church’s core value, as stated in the strategic plan: confessional heritage oriented, servanthood, ecumenical, uphold charismatic values, compassionate, age and gender sensitive equity and equality, stewardship; Christ-centered, unity in diversity, prayerfulness, transparency, accountability, integrity and honesty.³

In order to accomplish the mission, the EECMY employs a decentralized structure, both on the national and the grass roots level. Church government in the EECMY is structured on four

¹ EECMY Draft Strategic Plan Report (2013–2017) Prepared by: SAZ Professional Management Consultancy, Training & Research Plc, 11.

² EECMY Draft Strategic Plan Report, 11.

³ EECMY Draft Strategic Plan Report, 12.

administrative levels: local congregations, parishes, Synods, and the national Church. There is a decision-making body at each of these four levels of church government. The highest decision-making bodies at the national level are the general assembly, the council, the executive board, and the management committee. The decision-making bodies of the Synod are the convention, the council, the executive board, and the management committee. The decision-making bodies of the parish are the parish convention and the parish executive board. At congregation level, the decision-making bodies are the congregational convention, and congregational elders and lay leaders.

Even though the church has such a strong institutional structure, the influence of the charismatic movement upon the members of the EECMY is clear in the life and teaching of EECMY. This movement has helped the church to grow in faith and to fulfill the Lord's mission. "The charismatic movement is a constant reminder that God is not dead, nor is he nonexistent. This movement has done an enormous amount to kindle and rekindle faith in the living God who delights to answer prayers, to build his people into one, and to equip them with his gifts."⁴ By the help of Holy Spirit, Ethiopians have been the pioneers of the planting of new churches in Ethiopia. "Indigenous evangelists were also prominent in bringing about church growth. Commissioned and sent out they preached, taught and organized carrying out their threefold function as missionaries, catechists and teachers."⁵

In the early 1900s, experiences and practices usually associated only with Pentecostal denominations began to manifest themselves with increasing frequency in the EECMY. By the mid-twentieth century, it was clear that this movement had also spread to some pastors and

⁴ Michael Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1985), 295.

⁵ Bakke, *Christian Ministry*, 195.

congregations of EECMY. “If the charismatic movement can, in the providence of God, impress on the institutional captivity of the church the truth that every member is called to serve, that leadership exists to equip the saints for their God given work of service.”⁶

The Charismatic Movement in the Bible

To explain the concept and meaning of charismatic gifts, I follow the principle of *Sola Scriptura*, which demands that no extra biblical consideration enter in to the exegesis of a biblical passage to mitigate its intended meaning. There are many examples and texts in Bible which explain the person and work of Holy Spirit and about charismatic movement in both the Old and the New Testament. The doctrine of the person and meaning of the Holy Spirit is discussed in 1 Corinthians 12:8–10; 28; Romans 12:6–8; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 7:7; 1 Peter 4:11. In 1 Corinthians 14:1, Paul encouraged his readers to seek the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. In addition, John wrote that “many people saw the miraculous signs He was doing and believed in His name” (John 2:23). The texts of Scripture build a solid foundation for our clear understanding about the Holy Spirit and its role for mission and evangelistic outreach in the history of Church growth.

The Bible is the Word of God and the Gospel is the “power of God for the salvation of every one who believes” (Rom. 1:16). It is our Lutheran tradition that the Scripture alone is enough to save, as we experience that thousands have come to know Christ as Savior through preaching the Word of God— the Bible. It is clear in the Bible that the Apostles themselves prayed that God would confirm the preached Gospel with works of power. God confirms His word by miraculous signs and wonders in the early church and also confirms the truth of the

⁶ Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 297.

message of the Gospel also today.

While several New Testament writers, such as Mark, Luke, and Paul mention different spiritual gifts, it is Paul who gave a controlling framework to illuminate their purpose and operation by his description of the church as the body of Christ, comparing the functions of its differently gifted members with those of the parts of the human body. The important guiding points made by St. Paul that are particularly relevant to our discussion in this project are the following:

1. If the main work of the Holy Spirit is leading people to glorify Jesus Christ by confessing faith in Him as Lord, He also manifests Himself through different gifts and services which He gives to the church. In 1 Corinthians 12:8–10, 28–30, the apostle Paul mentions the lists of the spiritual gifts he had in mind, including the utterance of wisdom, the utterance of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, and the ability to discern spirits, various kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. Important at the top of the lists are gifts of intelligent and thoughtful utterance. And important at the bottom of the lists are gifts of tongues and their interpretation.

Among the spiritual gifts referred to in 1 Corinthians 12 are a number of terms that require some explanation. In 12:8 “the utterance of wisdom” and “the utterance of knowledge” may refer to an exceptionally thorough knowledge of the great truths of divine revelation, particularly the mysteries of the Gospel, and the ability to expound them in a clear and convincing manner as well as to apply them to individual cases in life. “Faith,” in this context, can hardly refer to saving or justifying faith but must point to a heroic, unwavering trust and confidence in the power of God to reveal Himself in extraordinary deeds that may seem impossible to men. The expression “gifts of healing” refers that gifts are given by God. “Paul is really saying that

whatever gift a man has comes from God. He calls gifts *charismata*. In the New Testament a *charisma* is something given to a man by God which the man himself could not have acquired or attained.”⁷ This explains the remarkable deeds performed in the early Christian church by certain believers who were enabled by the power of God to heal the sick without medication, cast out unclean spirits, cure the lame, and even on occasions raise the dead. “The working of miracles” is a broader term including the many wondrous deeds performed by the early Christians through the almighty power of Christ.

“Prophecy” is a rather difficult term to understand, since it is used in various ways in Scripture. It does not refer primarily to the gift of declaring coming events in advance, although this did occur in the apostolic church (Acts 11:27). It includes also the God-given ability to interpret Scripture correctly and to apply its message of Law and Gospel to the needs of all people. It is the gift of expressing what the will of God was in a given situation. The ability to “distinguish between spirits” refers to a God-given power by which certain individuals in the early church were able to test the prophets to determine whether they were false or true and to judge whether a doctrine was of God or not. “Various kinds of tongues,” in the case of the Corinthians, apparently had reference to a “language,” unintelligible to others as well as to the speaker, by which a Christian praised God. “The interpretation of tongues” evidently was the ability to transmit the content and message of such “language” for the benefit and edification of the speaker and other members of the body of Christ for the unity and harmony in the church but not for the division.

2. Therefore an individual being in a state of strong feeling, especially joy and happiness is not indication of spirituality or indication of the person filled with the Holy Spirit. True joy

⁷ William Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans*, rev. ed. (Edinburg: Saint Andrew Press, 1975), 160.

comes from the Lord Jesus Christ. “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:4–7). The joy without Christ is not indication of that we are children of God. We understand in Ethiopia that this kind of feeling is not limited to Christians, people can experience these before they become Christians. For many traditional people, before they were children of God, the very essence of their religious experience was their feeling of being carried away by spiritual forces. It is clear in 1 Corinthians 12:3, “Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says ‘Jesus be cursed!’ and no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit,” that the Corinthian Christians are able to call Jesus Lord by the Holy Spirit. According to St. Paul, this confession of Christ is the characteristic mark of those possessed by the Spirit of God.

3. St. Paul calls the attention of the Corinthian Christians to the many heavenly and earthly blessings they possess in Christ. As they believe in Jesus Christ; they become sanctified (1:2), possess grace of God (1:4), possess the gift in speech and knowledge (1:5), and possess every spiritual gift (1:7). They lack no spiritual gift in Christ. It is clear in letter that they also wait for the “revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ.” The Corinthian Christians trust that the return of Jesus Christ will bring complete victory for them. In his letter, St. Paul explains that the Corinthians thought of themselves as already existing in the realm of glory, engaging in the work of the Spirit, which they thought of as being beyond Christ. Therefore, St. Paul reminds them again and again that the spiritual gifts they possess are theirs in Christ. When Jesus returns, they will be complete. Even they possess all spiritual blessings, they were not using them properly. In

chapters 12 to 14, Paul gives them guidelines on the nature, purpose, and proper use of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit for growth, unity and harmony of the Church.

4. The charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are not given only for the select few in the church, but the gifts are given for all Christians who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. According to St. Paul, all Christians have been baptized into the body of Christ, and all are made to drink of the one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). Therefore the spiritual gifts that each possesses are for the benefit of the entire church; they are given “for the common good” (1 Cor. 12:7). The believers should use the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit in the service of Christ's body, the church, and not to serve himself. Any use of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit that does not edify the church is contrary to the intention of the Holy Spirit.

5. In 1 Corinthians 13, St. Paul discusses the basic attitude with which the Christians are to use the spiritual gifts God has given to them. In chapter 12, he has shown that they are charismata, God’s gifts of grace. Now in chapter 13 he admonishes the Corinthians to use them in a spirit of love to one another to edify the body of Christ for unity and harmony in the church. Chapter 13, the love chapter, is very important in the church today to create unity and harmony for God’s mission because, for Saint Paul, it is, indeed, the better way to explain the nature of Christian love.

6. St. Paul explains the nature of this Christian love about which he is speaking. It is not merely something emotional or a state of very strong feeling and passion. Instead, it controls the emotions that lead to the abuse of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. The character of the love is explained in 1 Corinthians 13:4–7: “Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoice in the right. Love bears all things, believe all things, hopes all

things, and endures all things.” It also has unusual characteristic that is always relevant and unending future in the life of Christian. According to the 1 Corinthians 13:9–13, the other gifts of the Holy Spirit such as prophecies, tongues, and knowledge are imperfect and incomplete in this life and shall, therefore, pass away when they have served their purpose, but Christian love will remain complete even in the state of perfection.

7. It is clear in 1 Corinthians 14:40, “but all things should be done decently and in order.” that the possession of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit in the congregation of Corinth had led to senseless pride and chaotic confusion. “Their use must always be subject to Him; and, when exercised publically, in a manner making for order and harmony, not confusion.”⁸ St. Paul, therefore, rebuked them and said that love must motivate their use of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit or they become meaningless and useless through abuse. According to Paul, a person who possesses tongues-speaking and though he may be able to speak not only in an unknown human language but with the tongues of angels, unless this gift is exercised in a spirit of love, it becomes nothing more than an unintelligible, meaningless set of sounds. According to 1 Corinthian 13, speaking in tongues, prophetic insights, heroic faith that can move mountains, and superhuman sacrifice cannot be useful and meaningful unless they are practiced in a spirit of Christian love. So, it is not the miraculous nature of a gift nor the spectacular character of one's willingness to sacrifice that makes spiritual gifts unambiguous marks of the Spirit's presence and power; it is only the spirit of Christian love in which the gifts are practiced.

8. According to 1 Corinthians 14, St. Paul prefers prophecy to tongue-speaking for a number of reasons. One who speaks in tongues speaks to God not to men. No one understands

⁸ D. Guthrie and J. A. Motyer, *Romans* 3rd ed. New Bible Commentary (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1970), 1067.

the one who speaks in tongues, and the result is that he edifies only himself (14:2). Indeed, tongues need interpretation in order to be useful and teach. On the other hand, he who prophesies speaks to men and as a result he edifies the Church for their up building, encouragement, and consolation. “He who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified” (1Cor. 14:5). Edification now becomes the theme of this chapter (vv. 3, 4, 5, 12, 17, 26). Tongue-speaking can be useful in the church only if it is interpreted. So tongue-speakers either need to have an interpreter or can interpret after they speak. And then it edifies the church. Without interpretation, no one in the Church knows what is being said, and it will be as if one speaks into the air (v. 9). Therefore, he who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret in order to edify (v. 13). Paul thanks God that he has spoken in tongues more than all of them (v. 18). Nevertheless, he concludes: “I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue” (v. 19). In full accord with this expressed principle, we have no record of Paul ever speaking to his churches except in understandable language.

9. In the context of Christian love, St. Paul advises strongly that the Corinthian congregation, “Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy” (14:1). St. Paul, who himself possessed the gift of tongues (1 Cor. 14:18), believed that it could be an authentic gift of the Spirit. He did not forbid its use for edification of oneself or, edification of others when interpreted, (1 Cor. 14:5, 39). He is not discussing the gift of tongues for the purpose of encouraging or assisting the Corinthians in possessing this gift. In discussing the gift of speaking of tongues, his purpose is rather to point out dangers and abuses that have resulted from its misuse and to encourage the use of other spiritual gifts, especially prophecy for unity and harmony of body of Christ- the Church.

10. To give more emphasis on the gift of tongues over other gifts is a sign of immaturity. In 1 Corinthians 14:20–25, Paul challenges the Corinthians to “grow up” in their thinking. Speaking in tongues might have negative result on “outsiders” and “unbelievers” for it may lead them to think Christians are mad (v.23). In verse 21, the apostle quotes the Old Testament (Is. 28:11–12), emphasizing that the effect of tongues on an unbeliever will be to harden rather than soften their heart.⁹ Thus the use of strange tongues in the Corinthian congregation might not serve to convert the sinners but instead could cause them to blaspheme. On the other hand, when members of the Corinthian congregation prophesy, which involves a testimony of their faith, and an outsider is present, there is the possibility that the unbeliever will be made conscious of his sin and unbelief and might be converted to Jesus Christ. The secret sins of his heart may be revealed, and the result might well be that such a one repents and worships God, openly recognizing God's presence in the congregation. Using the gift of prophecy in that way may result in winning people for Christ is our main goal.

Each believer is to consider himself an important and responsible participant in the life of the congregation. St. Paul advises that in a church service everything should be done in an orderly manner. Although Paul does not forbid speaking in tongues in their worship services (1 Cor. 14:39) he made important conditions: “So, my brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; but all things should be done decently and in order.” The gift of interpretation is very important here. Without an interpreter “let each of them keep silence in church and speak to himself and to God.” (14:27–28). Those who prophesy should prophesy in turn while the rest are meditating on what is said. According to St. Paul, God is a God of peace, not a God of confusion, so all gifts, even prophecy, should be used in an orderly manner to keep

⁹ Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 287.

unity and harmony in the congregation.

To summarize the points: there are different ways in which the Church may test the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit including the following:

(1) Do the preachers strongly and clearly bear witness about Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and give witness to His divine person and His work of salvation? And do they give greater attention to the cross and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ?

(2) Do the preachers accept what the Holy Spirit teaches through His prophets and apostles in the Bible and accept what the apostle Paul has written “as a command of the Lord.”

(3) Do the fruits they produce within the congregation fulfill the simple service of Christian love among the people of God and edify the church through their ministry?

The Theological Context

Biblical and Confessional Study: The Theological Challenges and Disputes Involved in the Charismatic Gifts of Holy Spirit in the EECMY.

There is an increasing need for historical-theological analysis and response to the challenges and contributions from the charismatic renewal movement in the EECMY and its role for growth of the church and in mission and evangelistic outreach and in building the body of Christ. We may apply the sound biblical teaching on the work of Holy Spirit to our time and context in Ethiopia. My research seeks to lay a solid foundation concerning charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit through study of the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions. The other materials written on the person and work of the Holy Spirit have not brought harmony and unity in the Church. My research intends to bring about a greater degree of unity and harmony to the church through implementation of developed strategy.

In recent years, many Christians in the EECMY welcome the greater emphasis that has

been placed on the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. The members of the Church want a spiritual renewal for a greater amount of zeal and commitment, and for power in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations inside the country and beyond. Most of the EECMY members agree that there is great need for a deeper appreciation of the work of the Holy Spirit in the church today. In the light of recent developments of the experience of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit in the church, the EECMY leaders are also deeply concerned that the function of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit be emphasized in a manner that tend to make the saving work of Christ appear less important. This may be the unintentional result of teaching members that it is necessary for them to experience two separate connections: the first is people connect with Christ for conversion and forgiveness; and second is connect with the Holy Spirit to get power to serve Christ and preach good news of our Lord Jesus Christ. The EECMY believes that when the members have Christ by faith, they also have the Holy Spirit and with Him all that is necessary for time and eternity for their spiritual life. Today in the church we see that the work of Christ may appear less important when members give more emphasis to the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is important that our members will also be careful to describe the life and work of Jesus in such a way that the inseparability of His divine and human natures is properly maintained in the ministry and that the focus is on the saving work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Any emphasis that would minimize the saving work of His divine redemptive power and make Jesus more as man's pattern for life than his Redeemer from eternal death must be avoided.

The Christian must exercise special caution as he/she defines the relationship between the Spirit and Jesus in the state of humiliation, lest he/she embrace a form of subordinationism. Scripture does portray Jesus' ministry as conducted in the power of the Spirit. Both the Old and the New Testaments speak of Jesus being anointed with the Spirit (Is. 11:2-9; 61:1 ff.; Luke

4:18ff.). Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit for the purpose of being tempted by Satan (Luke 4:1ff.). He returned and began His public ministry, preaching and teaching in Galilee in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14). It is even said that Jesus went through the land of Israel doing good, healing all who were overpowered by the devil, because God had anointed Him with the Spirit and with power (Acts 10:38). Moreover, Jesus' suffering and death are described in Hebrews as occurring through the Holy Spirit: "how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb.9:14).

However, especially in the Gospel of St. John, Jesus is portrayed as the One who sends forth the Spirit to be a *parakleetos*, a Counselor and Comforter who shall abide with his church and equip it with the power needed to perform its task in evangelizing the world. Moreover, the Scriptures also make clear that the work of the Holy Spirit is not to exalt himself above the Father and the Son but to lead men to confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ and to recognize his Father as their own. In presenting this important doctrine, one must be extremely careful, therefore, not to teach a subordinationism of either the Son or the Spirit. Although the relationship between these two Persons is presented in Scripture from both points of view, the Bible clearly teaches that the three Persons in the Trinity are coequal. A proper understanding of Spirit theology is dependent on a correct view both of the Trinity and of the personal union of the two natures in Christ. "But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26). In this text, we see three persons in one God.

In the modern theological discussion in EECMY context there are debates on the relation of conversion to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The question is asked: "Do the charismatic gifts of

the Holy Spirit occur at the time of conversion, or is it an experience different from and subsequent to one's coming to faith?" It is understandable that on the basis of Acts 2:38–41, many Pastors in EECMY today favor the view that the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to all Christians when they receive Christian baptism and come to faith in Christ. The EECMY Confessions that the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit is given to believers when they are converted is in harmony with this interpretation. It is agreeable that the Holy Spirit continues to give His gifts and blessings to believers after their conversion. It is clearly agreed with Lutheran understanding: "Neither you nor I could ever know anything of Christ, or believe in him and take him as our Lord, unless these were first offered to us and bestowed on our hearts through the preaching of the Gospel by the Holy Spirit."¹⁰

EECMY pastors are concerned, therefore, when the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are viewed as a second work of the Holy Spirit in addition to and beyond conversion and sanctification, and when the Christian is required to fulfill certain preconditions before receiving the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as strong wrestling with God, heart purification, complete obedience, yielding, surrendering oneself to God, and exercising "total faith," which is different from ordinary trust in Christ. In Ethiopia, the charismatic people emphasize that only those who are properly disposed to receive the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit through an attitude of expectancy, openness, and searching will actually receive it, as well as attempts to train people to receive such gifts of the Holy Spirit as speaking in tongues, may actually cultivate the notion that man's effort in some way is essential for the reception of God's free gifts. In his Epistle to the Galatians, St. Paul emphatically states that the Christians in Galatia had received the Spirit not by the works of the Law but by hearing with faith. "Does he who supplies the Spirit

¹⁰ Tappert. *Book of Concord*, 415.

to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?” (Gal. 3:5).

The EECMY pastors concerned when the experience of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit is treated as the means by which God equips the church for her mission in the world, particularly when the gifts of the Holy Spirit are considered as a supplement to the means of grace. According to the Biblical and the Lutheran Confessions the Word and the sacraments are the only means of grace and that the Holy Spirit always accompanies their use and through them gives all the blessings that are ours in Christ as well as every spiritual gift that is needed to carry out the mission of the church in a sinful world in Ethiopia and beyond (cf. Matt. 28:19; Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 11:26; Luke 16:29). It is the EECMY understanding that there is nothing beyond the Word and sacraments needed to equip the church for mission; through the Word and sacrament the Holy Spirit gives life, power, and growth to the EECMY. “Certainly is sought in God alone; the Spirit must give witness to their spirit that they are children of God. The result is a holy life, conversion of the will, expansion of the kingdom of God, and preaching God’s Gospel to the entire world.”¹¹ So, believers will continue to seek power and renewal for the church in the Word and sacraments that Holy Spirit gives to all.

According to the Biblical and confessional understanding, the Holy Spirit is given to Christians through the preaching of the work of Christ, that is, the Gospel — not through preaching about the Holy Spirit and His gifts. Moreover, when the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are considered to be a second experience beyond the Word and sacrament and when it is said to give powers and blessings that are not given through the Word and sacraments, the result is a view that fails to take into account the full benefits of the gifts of Holy Spirit. God is

¹¹ Lindberg, *Third Reformation*, 157.

bringing to the church full blessings through the work of the Holy Spirit. “Today the Lord is bringing the full blessing of Pentecost to his churches, regardless of secular opposition and ecclesiastical resistance,”¹²

When the Bible discusses the unity and harmony of the Christian church, it always involves the activity of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who gives the fellowship among believers in the body of Christ. It is also the Holy Spirit who gives the members of the church gifts by which they can serve one another in the kingdom of God. Christian unity and harmony must be unity in the Spirit. It is therefore incorrect when the Charismatics made a distinction between a Christian with gifts of the Holy Spirit and other Christians, which easily fosters the wrong divisive notion that the former constitute a spiritually elite class of Christians. According to the Scripture the faith that unites all believers to Christ and to one another to create harmony also makes all members of his body equally acceptable to God (Eph. 4:3–6). In the body of Christ, the Holy Spirit gives the gifts as he wills. “All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as He wills” (1 Cor. 12:11). The charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are to be used in humble service and not as an occasion for anyone “to think of himself more highly than he ought to think” (Rom. 12:3).

There is enough basis for exercise of Christian fellowship and unity other than the agreement of the theology of Holy Spirit and charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Both Biblical and doctrinal teachings are taught by the Holy Spirit. Common worship with those who deny doctrines of Word of God dishonors the Holy Spirit and fails to give a proper Christian witness to the erring brother and Sisters. In our context in Ethiopia, among EECMY congregations, those who experience the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit show a high regard

¹² Lindberg, *Third Reformation*, 10.

for the authority of the Bible and give much emphasis on Bible study, Christian love and fellowship, more time for prayer and witness about the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Moreover, many charismatic Christians give the impression that they read the Scriptures more from the perspective of the gifts of Holy Spirit than from a Christ-centered approach. As all Christians in EECMY need to become aware of the rich Biblical testimony to the person and activity of the Holy Spirit, it should not be forgotten that the basic purpose of the work of the Holy Spirit, including the inspiration of the Bible, is to make men and women wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come” (John 16:13).

The Role of the Holy Spirit in Mission

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He is God. The activity of the Holy Spirit in mission is too important to be unnoticed. “All scriptures are inspired by God and are useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living” (2 Tim. 3:16). The Spirit through His Word teaches the truth. For example, He teaches through the Word that Jesus alone saves from hell. He also teaches that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. The Holy Spirit through His Word rebukes error. One error, for example, is that there are other ways to salvation for those who haven’t heard of our Savior. The Holy Spirit confers right teaching through the Word. That Word declares that Jesus gives salvation to those who come to Him.

The Holy Spirit through His Word corrects faults. One fault, for example, is that of a missionary dominating the young church he has come to serve, or using the Gospel message to make any kind of personal gain be it psychological, financial or something else. The Holy Spirit

brings people to the incomparable understanding that everything that goes against the Word is incorrect. He corrects such faults. The Holy Spirit through His Word gives instruction for right living. Love, for example, should be so pervasive, so visible, that people will know whose disciples we are. The giving of the Word is the first activity through which the Holy Spirit empowers mission.

The charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit helps the Ethiopian church to do its mission. But this has been a challenge for a conservative institutional church. “The movement of the Spirit always poses a challenge to the conservatism of the institution. Somehow the Church of Christ must embody both Charisma and order. Movements of renewal will remain a lasting challenge to those who exalt institution over life.”¹³

In the EECMY the movement of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit has brought about an increased interest in miraculous healing among members. It is common hearing many testimonies are being given by Christian people to the result that God has healed their ills and cured their sicknesses without the use of medical help, only God answers to their prayers and by the laying on of hands through elders of the congregation and through gifted preacher. As these testimonies increase in many parts of Ethiopia, the question is being raised: Many pastors ask today that what shall the church say to the claim that healing miracles are being performed among God's people also today by the power of the Holy Spirit? It is important to remember that we find many examples of miraculous healings in both the Old and the New Testaments. It is also clear from the Gospels message healing the sick was an important and integral part of the ministry of Jesus; and also when the Jesus sent His twelve apostles into the cities of Galilee, He gave them specific instructions that they were “to preach the kingdom of God and to heal” (Luke

¹³ Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 287.

9:2). It is also clear that, when He appointed seventy others and sent them ahead of Him, He told them also to “heal the sick and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you’” (Luke 10:8–9). According to the Book of Acts the miracles of healing in the early church continued at least for a time even after the ascension of Jesus into heaven.

Through the work of the Holy Spirit it is clear that God can choose to perform mighty works in and through His church even today. The gift of miracles healing are important for unity and harmony of the church as well as church growth. We should not reject the possibility that God can intervene in the course of natural things as He did in apostolic times through healing the sick without medical care.

As mentioned earlier, the disciples performed miracles of healing in response to Jesus’ command that they should both preach and heal at the same time. When Jesus gave His final command before His ascension to the right hand of God, He said: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.” (Matt. 28:19–20). Even though the miraculous healing is not mention in the Great Commission, we cannot deny that God may still give His gifts of healing to the church today. The church should continue to engage in healing ministries as part of its effort to show love and compassion to all men and women and it shows God’s care and love to His people. As engaging in healing ministry, the church should not forget the basic responsibility to seek the salvation of the sinner through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The clear purpose of apostles was not only to gain a hearing for the Gospel at a time when the church was being established but to show the new age had dawned in Jesus Christ. While the preaching of the Gospel to seek the salvation of the sinner increases, as time passed in the book of Acts, the miraculous healing

decreases. It shows that preaching the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ is more important than miraculous healing. The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith” (Rom. 1:16). “This external word, preached orally by men like you and me... is what Christ left behind as an external sign, by which his church, or his Christian people in the world, should be recognized.”¹⁴ It is the power of the Gospel which is more important than miraculous healing for salvation of human being. It is the written word of God that should be preached. “God’s way of teaching in today’s church is not by fresh revelation but by exposition of his revelation completed in Christ and in Scripture.”¹⁵

It is important to remember that God wants the church to be concerned with the physical needs of their fellow brothers and sisters. It is the motto of EECMY to serve whole person that means serving both physical and spiritual needs of the person. The word of God gives many directives in that regard, and the church should carry out the will of God by praying for healing in times of sickness and by using medical care that God in His goodness has given for the healing of the physically and mentally sick people. That means the healing service given by doctors, nurses, and others who are skilled in the care and treatment of disease are blessings from God to His people. Therefore, the Christian should seek personally to alleviate the sufferings and sickness of his fellowmen to the extent that this is possible through praying to God for miraculous healing and natural treatment through trained doctors.

The Church must be thankful to God when miraculous healing happen to His people, but it also recognizes that illness and misfortune do not represent a person’s greatest evil, and physical health and prosperity do not represent a person’s greatest good. We believe that there can be a

¹⁴ Lindberg, *Third Reformation*, 52.

¹⁵ John R.W. Stott, *Baptism and Fullness: The Work of the Holy Spirit Today* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 102.

victorious faith in Christ when there is no bodily healing and a glorious witness to the grace of God in the midst of suffering; it is all for glory of God. So we teach that as members of the church pray for healing and earnestly hope for recovery, they submit patiently to the will of God since God knows that all things work together for good to them that love God. “We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28). In this passage, Paul, “says that those who love God, and who are called according to his purpose, know well that God is intermingling all things for good to them.”¹⁶ God’s love is always great. God is good all the time whether we are healed or sick.

The Doctrinal Position of the EECMY Concerning Spiritual Gifts.

In Ethiopia, the greater emphasis that has been placed on the work of the Holy Spirit today is welcomed by the Church. Through movement of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, we experience that there are the greater zeal and commitment in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations within the country and beyond. Most of the EECMY members in general agree that there is great need for a deeper appreciation of the work of the Holy Spirit in the church today. But the church should remember that the Holy Spirit and His gifts are offered only where God has promised them, in the Word and sacraments.

The Word is the foundation of the church and the Sacraments are the Word made visible. Since our concern is with the relationship of the Lutheran tradition to the Pentecostal and charismatic churches and movements, the pertinent theme for us in Luther’s theology of baptism and the Lord’s Supper is his emphasis upon God’s promise made visible in these sacraments.¹⁷

The Bible and our Lutheran Confessions emphasize that the Holy Spirit edifies the church only through the means of grace as the sacraments are instituted by the Lord to nourish our faith. And

¹⁶ Barclay, *Romans*, 112.

¹⁷ Lindberg, *Third Reformation*, 51.

only through the witness of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the sacraments does the believer come to faith and remain steadfast in the faith, receive the assurance of God's love and forgiveness, witness to others, and live in accord with God's will. "So every Christian believer has an experience of the Holy Spirit from the very first moments of his Christian life. For the Christian life begins with a new birth, and the new birth is a birth 'of the Spirit' (Jn. 3:3-8)."¹⁸

Through the means of grace the Holy Spirit gives on the church all the blessings that are ours in Christ as well as every spiritual gift that is needed to carry out the mission of the church in a sinful world. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). The church will accept with joy and gratitude any gift which the Holy Spirit in His grace may choose to give on us for the purpose of edifying the body of Christ. The Church will recognize that the Lord does not forsake His church but promises the abiding presence of His Spirit all the time. Therefore, the church will not reject that God may in His grace and wisdom give some in present with the same abilities and powers He gave His church in early time. But it will also take seriously the admonition of the apostle to "test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). By testing the teachings and emphases of the different individuals and groups who expose the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, we find reason to express our concern which is, first of all, that the doctrines of the word of God should be taught in its purity. In our teaching, we note that such important doctrines as justification by grace through faith, Baptism, the means of grace, and other major articles of the Christian faith are involved in our teaching curriculum. We should also be concerned for the spiritual welfare of those who are

¹⁸ Stott, *Baptism & Fullness*, 19.

engaged in the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit and activity and for those who are under their spiritual care.

Through workshops and our teaching, the participants are directed toward a common concern for the Bible as the norm of Christian belief and practice. The issue of the workshops is not the teacher's personality or new kinds of worship forms in the church but the teachings of the Bible. The EECMY is deeply concerned, therefore, when the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are considered to be a second experience beyond the conversion and when it is said to grant powers and blessings that are not given through the Word and sacraments in the church. We do not agree with such a view which denies the full benefits of Baptism and conversion. It is belief of the EECMY that only Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the use of God's Word are external means of grace. By these means of grace alone the Holy Spirit has chosen to work among us. Christians should pray always but prayer is not a means of grace but a proper response to God's grace as offered in the holy sacrament. "In its various forms, speaking in tongues is a non-learned expression of praise and prayer that edifies the believer. Thus its primary focus is in personal devotions."¹⁹ The church today also concerned when speaking in tongues is identified as one of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit which imparts to the one using it a realization of his sins, a deeper and more constant awareness of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, having a stronger faith, the ability to pray at a deeper level, an awakened interest to study the Bible, and a new freedom to witness to others what Jesus means to him and about the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Within the charismatic renewal this 'definite experience' is uniquely expressed by glossolalia- speaking in tongues."²⁰ The EECMY is also concerned that the experience of the

¹⁹ Lindberg, *Third Reformation*, 230

²⁰ Lindberg, *Third Reformation*, 230.

charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit is treated as a means by which God equips the church for its mission in the world, particularly when the gifts are regarded as a supplement to the means of grace. It is included in the EECMY teaching curriculum that beyond the Word and the sacraments nothing is needed to equip the church for its task for mission, for through them the Holy Spirit gives life, power, and growth to the church. “The Sacraments provide the grace of God through visible signs, water, bread and wine. Sacraments hold twofold basis: the word of God and the visible elements or signs and it has enough power for salvation and church growth.”²¹ The Church should, therefore, continue to seek power and renewal and growth in the Word and sacraments and not in the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit.

According to the teaching guideline in the Mekane Yesus Seminary, it is clear that God has revealed His will directly and immediately to the prophets, the apostles, and other holy men of God, and through them He has made His will known to us through His word.²² The EECMY emphasizes the Biblical teaching of the external Word as the instrument of the Holy Spirit and that rejects the subjectivism that seeks divine comfort and strength through a personal experience of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit instead of in the objective word of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The church should learn and respond to God’s will by means of study of the Bible and a proper use of the sacraments. Concerning speaking in tongues, we do not consider it as new doctrine as it is written in the Bible. “Since Lutheran doctrine is based upon the Bible and the Bible certainly speaks of tongues, we can be certain that this is not a new doctrine in the Lutheran Church.”²³

²¹ Mekane Yesus Seminary College of Distance Education: Doctrine III: Holy Spirit and Church. March 2014, Addis Ababa, 85.

²² Mekane Yesus Seminary College of Distance Education: Doctrine III: Holy Spirit and Church. March 2014, Addis Ababa, 85.

²³ Lindberg, *Third Reformation*, 230.

We should understand that signs and wonders are not guarantees that the Spirit of God dwells within an individual. We find many examples of miraculous healings in both the Old and New Testaments and from the Gospels that healing the sick was an important and integral part of the ministry of Jesus; and when Jesus sent forth His 12 apostles into the cities of Galilee, He gave them specific instructions that they were “to preach the kingdom of God and to heal” (Luke 9:2). And when He also appointed 70 others and sent them ahead of Him, He told them to “heal the sick . . . and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you’” (Luke 10:8–9). It is clear according to the Book of Acts the miracles of healing in the early church continued at least for a time after the ascension of Jesus into heaven.

It is part of EECMY teaching that the supernatural exists as does the possibility that God can intervene in the natural things as God choose to perform such mighty works in and through His church today. But the Bible warns against over-emphasis on the performance of supernatural deeds rather than on the proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: “Jesus therefore said to him, ‘Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe’” (John 4:48). We have to be careful of being deceived by signs and wonders which will appear in the last days to lead Christians astray from the sound and true teaching of the scripture. The Bible warns the world against demanding miracles from the church to prove its faith: “an evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah.’ So he left them and departed” (Matt. 16:4).

It is written in the Bible, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew

you; depart from me, you evildoers” (Matt. 7:21–23). This means even such signs as casting out devils, prophesying, and other mighty works, though they be done in Jesus’ name, do not guarantee that they are God-pleasing. It is also written in the Gospel of Luke:

The seventy returned with joy saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:17–20).

It is Biblical and confessional teaching that faith in Christ does not eliminate illness and affliction from the life of a Christian. Illness, pain, affliction, and death have come into the world as a result of Adam’s fall into sin. So it is our faith that Christ has redeemed us from our sickness which is result of sin: “This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, ‘He took our infirmities and bore our diseases’” (Matt. 8:17). But this does not mean that God has removed sickness from the life of His people and it also does not mean that, if an individual has sufficient faith, he can be free of an illness by the power of the Holy Spirit. Sickness is not sign of evil and a weak faith. Sometimes illness, pain and afflictions are often works of God which are intended for our good. So it is Biblical and true that Christians should pray for healing in the full confidence that they submit patiently to the will of God since they know that all things work together for good to them that love God: “We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him” (Rom. 8:28). We should not manipulate or control God, even with our prayers. We cannot abdicate God for our own will but we should pray, “Lord, if it be Thy will.” We should base our prayer not on subjective feeling but on the objective promises of God described on the Bible. The Gospel is the unfailing base of hope and certainty in this life on earth and the life to come in heaven.

The experience of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit is not a basis for Christian

fellowship. In order to have unity and harmony in the church, we should pray earnestly for and work diligently toward a God-pleasing harmony and unity among members of the church. We cannot find a basis for unity and harmony in a common experience of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. For the unity and harmony of the church, we should balance two extremes in the church. “The two extremes of misuse and non-use must be avoided so that the gift of tongues may be a blessing not only for the speakers but for the enrichment of the body of Christ.”²⁴ The gifts of the Holy Spirit also include the natural gifts and it does not necessarily include only extraordinary spiritual gifts. We rejoice in the gracious promise that the gift of the Holy Spirit will be given to all generations of believers “For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him.”(Acts 2:39). God give His blessings according to his good pleasure. “All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills” (1 Cor. 12:11).

Christ said, “I will build my church” (Mt. 16:18), and the Book of Acts is devoted to describing how He did it. In Acts, we see the Holy Spirit empowering people to start local congregations. Jesus said His Church would be unshakable — the power of hell cannot overcome it, or even withstand its onslaught. Since it is built by the power of the Holy Spirit, other powers never defeat it. Throughout the Book of Acts, it was the Spirit who took the initiative. For example, it was in a prayer meeting that He called the leaders of the church at Antioch to start an intentional worldwide missionary movement (Acts 13:3–5). When Paul and his missionary team miscued on God’s strategy, it was the Holy Spirit who stopped them dead in their tracks and redirected them, not once, but twice (Acts 16:6–10). The Holy Spirit instructs and guides people for mission work. I believe it is the work of the Holy Spirit that is responsible

²⁴ Lindberg, *Third Reformation*, 231.

for the remarkable growth and maturity of EECMY during the past years since January 21, 1959.

The Holy Spirit alone can empower believers for supernatural living and supernatural ministry. The Bible calls this work the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23) and gifts of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12–14; Eph. 4:1–11). The Holy Spirit is the only one able to work unity among strong minded pioneers, among people of diverse cultures, and among egocentric, fallen humans. He is the only one who can take individuals bent on securing their own lives and make them willing to throw all away for the sake of the Gospel. Such is the evidence of the Holy Spirit at work. The Holy Spirit alone can empower people for a missionary vocation. If a person does not have the supernatural gift of evangelism, how can he even begin to carry out the apostolic task, planting the church of Christ in places where it is not? The Holy Spirit is central for missionary life and service. It is He who energize the evangelists. A few decades ago, the charismatic movement in Ethiopia was the agent of dissention within the church. But now, its concern is for evangelism. The members of the church have come to understand that gifts are not given for self-fulfillment, but for service of God and building of His church. Now the EECMY is concerned about evangelism and mission work within the country and beyond.

In the Ethiopian context as I observed, many who have witnessed such miraculous works of Holy Spirit have been transformed from hopeless men and women of this world into children of God. As children of God, many have found great happiness in discovering opportunities to serve God publicly. “Mercifully, I find that many who have come to faith and subsequently to baptism and confirmation, take the opportunity to give a public testimony and to explain the difference the Spirit is making in their lives. Many who have become alive in the Spirit, do not seek to be re-baptized but rather to serve Christ and witness to his power to transform lives.”²⁵

²⁵ Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 287.

Christ sent the Holy Spirit expressly to “convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment” (John. 16:8). This work of the Holy Spirit is directly tied in with His original work of creation — creating humankind in the image of God. By making us God-compatible, the Holy Spirit gives us the capacity to belong to God in an intimate, loving relationship. But, by violating that relationship, we humans have been alienated from the Lord, and the divine image we have received has been made dysfunctional. Yet, it is that basic compatibility, implanted in us by the Holy Spirit that makes possible His communication with us, convicting of sin and need for repentance.

The Holy Spirit needs to transform the individual’s core nature so that the activities of the Holy Spirit have meaning in his life (John. 3:5–8; Titus 3:5). God only is the final judge of who has been regenerated. He wants His people to be interim fruit inspectors, to discern and lead people God-ward.

The Church also exercises all spiritual gifts that God has given it by Holy Spirit, fully aware that spiritual pride cause serious offense and disunity to the body of Christ. Recognizing that spiritual gifts may be abused, the church will employ the gifts that God has given it with Christian love, always serving to edify the body of Christ, cause for unity and harmony and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ “with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:2–3). Love among members of the church has great power for unity and edification of the Church. And it is also written “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and builds itself up in love” (Eph. 4:15–16).

The Church should give more attention to the work of the Holy Spirit as the movement of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit grow widely within the Church. The Church today benefits from giving more devotion and thinking of Christ's promises concerning the Holy Spirit in the Bible. The church today prays for the presence of the Holy Spirit saying, "Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord, be all thy graces now outpoured." It will also make every effort, particularly in its preaching and its various programs of instruction, to increase the awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit to create unity and harmony in the church.

The EECMY should be alert to the fact that the movement of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit within the church body did not arise in vacuum. It is the opinion of many Christians that the church falls short in the service of Christ and his church and to claim the power that God promises us through the Holy Spirit in Word and sacraments. So in order to meet the questions raised by many Christians, we must intensify and increase our use of the Word and sacraments at every level of our existence so that the church may have a renewed sense of the joy, peace, and power God has promised in his word that he will endow through the Holy Spirit to his people. Nine spiritual gifts referred to in 1 Corinthians 12 are present among EECMY congregations in the 21st century even as they were in the early church and that they are in fact being manifested among God's people in our times and become causes for division. "Gifts are spoiled according to the following cases: (1) sometimes charismatics become out of control with much shouting, jumping, groaning, and acclamations which make disturbance and disorder; (2) charismatics put themselves at a higher level of spirituality as they are superior to all believers. This brought barrier between believers and charismatics; (3) the gifts are used as means for personal benefit rather than benefiting the church. In addition, (4) the gifts are seen as personal possession rather

than God's gifts for the building up of others."²⁶

The other view is that the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit such as tongues, divine healing, and prophecy were given by the Spirit to His church in apostolic times but that they have since disappeared from the church. Christians with this view doubt the validity of the experiences of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit today in the church. Such differences of opinion in the EECMY have frequently caused tension, and even division among Christians. Charismatics hold that the experience of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit meets a need within the Christian church as well as in their own personal lives by providing joy and peace. They think that they produce spiritual renewal within the church. Charismatics are less concerned about the institutional church and they see a lack of commitment on the part of many who claim church membership. The charismatics feel that many Christians do not find in their faith joy and peace, and that many Christians do not show love for one another as they should, and that in many congregations of EECMY, there is a lack of emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit, and that church services are often too impersonal and formal as Sunday worship led by liturgy. While charismatics over-emphasize the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit as the cure for these ills within Church, it is clear that some of the practices and theological tenets of this movement create conflict with Biblical sound teachings, thereby causing divisions within various congregations of the EECMY. The main problem of the charismatic movement is its tendency to claim direct spiritual illumination apart from the Word of God. To solve such problem, the church should focus on the Biblical and Lutheran confession as the great Reformation emphasizes on grace alone, faith alone, and Scripture alone. It is true that anything that leads people away

²⁶ Mekane Yesus Seminary College of Distance Education: Doctrine III: Holy Spirit and Church, March 2014, Addis Ababa, 24.

from the Word of God and presence of the Holy Spirit and power in their lives is a soul-destroying, satanic delusion and cause for division in the church rather than creating unity and harmony among members of the church.

We should not pass judgment on the Holy Spirit's presence and gifts only on the basis of our feeling and how and when we perceive it in our hearts, because the Holy Spirit's work is hidden. "Thriving in the Spirit comes at God's initiative. Our job is to prepare the soil of Church life so the Holy Spirit can best do this advocacy and influence."²⁷ The church must give counsel and guidance to congregations and individuals in this area of work of the Holy Spirit. The Church must prepare the teaching guidelines with respect to the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, which offer pastoral guidelines for ministering to the spiritual needs of those who are affected by the current tensions created by the misuse of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit.

If someone has a problem because of his sins, we should never tell him to find solution through experiencing the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, since that means that the person is directed away from Christ to his own inner spiritual estate. "There appears to be anticipation of this new dwelling in the fact that the Holy Spirit is already given to believers as a first installment of the new life. Again there may be some tension, in that the gift of the Spirit might more plausibly be linked to the renewal of the inward person inside the old body of the believer."²⁸ This kind of teaching directs the person with the problem because of his sins to his own experience of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit as the basis for his certainty and the joy of his salvation and places him once again under the bondage of the Law. This creates disunity among members of the church and leads either to a self-righteous confidence in one who

²⁷ Luecke, *Your Encounter with the Holy Spirit*, 24.

²⁸ Mekane Yesus Seminary College of Distance Education, *Doctrine III: Holy Spirit and Church*, March 2014, Addis Ababa, 104.

has the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit or to spiritual despair for the person who has had no experience of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. Confidence in human experience is earthly security, but our security must be on the Holy Spirit, who always directs us to Jesus Christ and to God's promise in the preaching of the Gospel. As we know, the Gospel is the gracious promise of the remission of sins for the sake of Jesus Christ for those who believe in Jesus Christ as personal savior and Lord. The forgiveness of sins is given by faith in the promise, and only by faith and no other teaching is full Gospel. It is only by faith but not human works. "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8). We should be warned against doctrine which is presented as the Word and will of God, when in fact the Bible does not clearly teach such doctrine. The Bible forbids the teaching of personal opinions and private interpretation of Scripture as God's Word and will: "Behold, I am against the prophets, says the Lord, who use their tongues and say, 'Says the Lord'" (Jer. 23:31). Theological research helps the church to keep its members from false teaching: "A good leader will help the congregation make an informed choice about how they will face the future. Some fresh movement of the Holy Spirit will have to happen to even step up to such choice, let alone make it."²⁹

²⁹ Mekane Yesus Seminary College of Distance Education. Doctrine III, Holy Spirit and Church, March 2014, Addis Ababa, 105.

CHAPTER THREE

RECENT RESEARCH

The Historical Context

As the EECMY seeks to resolve the tensions that have arisen within its midst because of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, it is important that the basic issues be clearly defined and understood to create unity and harmony within the church. It should be known that the basic question is not whether the Holy Spirit gives gifts to his church also in the present day. Nor is there disagreement regarding the fact that the church should earnestly pray Almighty God to give the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. The following questions are very important to understand basic issues in the church in related to the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit:

Does the Bible teach that the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are a second encounter with the Holy Spirit, separate and different from conversion?

Are the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit an experience that a person can have only if he/she meets certain preconditions, such as a conscientious desire for gifts, total surrender to Christ as Lord, a special degree of obedience, or strong prayer for this gift?

Does the Bible clearly and unmistakably designate speaking in tongues as the usual manifestation of spirituality?

Does the Bible clearly promise that the same charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit that were given to the early church will be granted to the church today?

The EECMY has always agreed that the central and most important teaching of the Bible is the Gospel, which brings the good news that the sinner is justified by grace through faith in Jesus

Christ. Charismatics in the church today emphasize the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit as a second major experience in the Christian's life, and focuses more Spirit-centered than Christ-centered. "The Lutheran emphasis upon the connection between Word and Sacraments and Spirit becomes tenuous in light of the charismatic emphasis upon presence and power."¹ This may lead to misunderstanding about the person and work of Christ (his glory and benefits) and to an over emphasis on the person and work of Holy Spirit.

The EECMY has always believed that through the Word and Sacraments the Holy Spirit gives to the believer all the blessings and spiritual gifts that are ours in Christ. The charismatics in the church emphasize the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit as a new source of power and assurance for the Christian. They claim that God communicates directly with believers through prophecy, visions, tongues, or other means gifts other than means of grace. "The renewal serves an important purpose in reminding the church of some of the more neglected gifts. This category includes healing, prophecy, vision, and revelation, as well as speaking in tongues."²

The EECMY confesses that all who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are one in Christ and one with each other and there must be unity and harmony in the church: "So every Christian believer has an experience of the Holy Spirit from the very first moments of his Christian life. For the Christian life begins with a new birth, and the new birth is a birth of the Spirit. (John 3:3-8)"³ The Church rejects improper differences between members of the one holy Christian church in relation to proper use of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the EECMY, members are "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). Although the charismatic movement within the EECMY explains that they are fostering the unity of the

¹ Lindberg, *Third Reformation*, 294.

² Lindberg, *Third Reformation*, 231.

³ Stott. *Baptism & Fullness*, 19.

church through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the fact remains that the distinction between those who possess the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit and other Christians, tends to create disharmony and disunity within the church.

The EECMY teaching has stressed the importance of fruits of the Holy Spirit such as love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness rather than extraordinary charismatic gifts. It needs clear understanding that all fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit are given by God's grace alone. The Bible does not teach us that the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are for all Christian at all ages of history, nor has it taught that speaking in tongues is the usual manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit empowers the church to resist abusing power. This is a foundational aspect of reconciliation: restoring the relationship between God and human beings. In the church, every baptized believer is endowed with a special gift for mission, for mutual up-building and encouragement. Whether they be male or female, lay or clergy, young or old, all their gifts are to be developed, appreciated, and availed.

God's empowerment extends also to society at large through the mission activities of the church as one of God's empowering instruments in the world. Through its service and diaconal ministers, the church provides help for the immediate needs of people in distress. However, the church is called to go beyond a "hand out" or charitable ministry to a mission of empowerment. The church seeks ways to assist those in need, regardless of their origin or creed, to regain their human dignity by asserting control over their own lives.

It has been a great privilege for the pastors and evangelists and other church workers to be allowed to work with God in this time. The *qalichas*, which in the Sidama language are people who are ritual experts and spirit cult specialists, had tremendous power over the people in many of the areas where the evangelical revival was well received. Words such as freedom, peace, and

safety were new and beautiful and have helped many people come to faith. It can also be underlined that the liberating power of the Gospel gives people a new sense of self-respect. Many of the evangelical Christians were landless peasants, more or less at the mercy of the landowners. “If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36). The evangelical movement within the church has created a great need for instruction, counseling, and even administration. *Sheetane*, a spirit of possession or an evil spirit in the Christian understanding, had never been for the people a lord they gladly served. The common people felt exploited by the traditional religion and the economic pressure it exerted upon them. They, therefore, received the Gospel or the message of Jesus Christ, who was stronger than Satan, with joy. The strong desire to be delivered from the yoke and chains of Satan prepared the people for the news of Jesus Christ. The acceptance of Christ also made the economic burdens on the family lighter. Through the power of Jesus Christ, many Christians have been delivered from both the oppression of Satan and of the economic burden of the traditional religion.

The Literature Review

The literature review focuses on the main topic of my MAP. The three important publications on theology of the Holy Spirit are: 1) *A Theology of Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness* by Frederick Dale Bruner (2001); 2) *Baptism & Fullness: The Work of the Holy Spirit* by John Stott (1979); and 3) *On the Holy Spirit: In Biblical Teaching, through the Centuries and Today* by Anthony Thiselton (2013).

Bruner demonstrates from the text of the Bible that the Spirit is, in fact, the Spirit “of Christ” and that its work is glorifying Jesus and making Him and His will known, rather than seeking to glorify Himself (Spirit). Bruner argues that we are given the Spirit, not when we seek it, directly, but rather when we seek Christ.

Bruner provides the steady, reliable, and broad theological foundation of an F.F. Bruce, the felicity of expressing of a Donald Carson, and the penetrating insight of a book by Robert Alter. In the book, the shadow of Luther still looms over sections of the book, but this does not detract in the least from the two major contributions of the work. And, in terms of history of interpretation, there is a certain charm to the interaction with the theologians of bygone days: Bultmann, Beasley–Murry, Lampe, and Schnackenburg, to name a few. The first major contribution of the author is the explanation of Pentecostalism: history, beliefs, and interpretive strategies. This book explains why Pentecostals would insist on tongue-speaking as the essential mark of a true Christian. In the Ethiopian context, the Pentecostals think that speaking in tongue is a mark of salvation. I am able to understand from the book that the renewal service helps the church remind some of the neglected gifts of the Holy Spirit. This includes healing, prophecy, vision, and revelation, as well as speaking in tongues. The second major contribution of Bruner is the exposition of key biblical texts relating to the Holy Spirit. The author states baptism as a salvific event and insists that the church is the place where the Spirit is received. Its emphasis upon the connection between word and Sacraments and the Holy Spirit that becomes light of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. I agree with the book that it states if the Spirit is received in baptism, there is no waiting for a “second experience” to finish the transaction. The calm reception in baptism, of course, will not carry the flash and bang of Pentecostal expectations of a separate “Spirit baptism.” The author of the book insists that here — rather than in a charismatic revival meeting, is where the Spirit is truly at work. According to the author the gifts of the Holy Spirit are many and varied and at least one is given to every Christian at the time of baptism. It is given by the sovereign, gracious will of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and the gifts are for the common good to build up the church. Although Pentecostals consider baptism in the Holy

Spirit as second experience of the Spirit beyond conversion that is accompanied by speaking in tongues, Bruner made it clear that speaking in tongues cannot be the sign of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

According to Bruner there is a lot of room for the Holy Spirit to act among non-Pentecostals while offering a serious challenge to the excessive and strange claims from those who are charismatic. I agree with the author as he shifts the criteria from what the Holy Spirit might do for me and others in mission and evangelistic outreach and in building the body of Christ. The reading of the book fills me with the humble comfort that is at place in Biblical Christianity. Bruner is, in my opinion, calm, clear, sympathetic, and thoughtful in his presentation of the work of the Holy Spirit and he is clearly in touch with the subject matter both historically and biblically. His writing is relevant to my research as I am working to create biblical understanding on the use of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit and bring about the unity and harmony in the church.

One other book for my literature review is by John Stott, *Baptism & Fullness*. The book discusses the meaning and work of the Holy Spirit, Baptism of Spirit, Filling with the Spirit, Gifts, and the Fruit of the Spirit. Stott is more concerned with what the Bible actually says than with supporting either 'side' of the debate. Some may disagree with his methodology of interpretation which leads him to emphasize doctrinal passages and de-emphasize narrative passages that do not include a theological interpretation. Stott makes the distinction between 'Baptism' and 'Filling' with the Spirit. With all the different teachings about the work and manifestation of the Holy Spirit, the author in his small volume contributes much towards beginning an understanding of the Scriptural view. He correctly asserts that the entire Christian life is in the Spirit. It begins at baptism, with water and the Word of God and the gift of the Spirit

and faith. According to the author, the Holy Spirit does not want to draw attention to himself, but always to Christ our Savior. For there is no forgiveness of sin in any other way except by faith in Jesus. The Spirit points not to individual gifts and manifestation, but to edification of the body gathered under Word and Sacrament. The author also explains that the modern charismatic teaching of tongues does not reflect what New Testament teaches.

Another important book for my literature review is Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit: In Biblical Teaching through the Centuries, and Today*. I am motivated to know the story of the Holy Spirit in the teaching and theology of the church. The book contains the most comprehensive and important ideas for my MAP as I am focusing on both biblical and confessional understanding on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. The author gives a basic overview of the biblical and historical teachings on the work of the Holy Spirit, and explores the major historical streams that the charismatics reflect in their teachings. The book gives the important guidelines that motivate the leaders of the church. I agree with the author as he bridges the gap of misunderstanding and by giving possibilities for the contemporary theological work on the theology of the Holy Spirit. Thiselton gives important guidance through the different topics related the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit which is very relevant to my study. According to Thiselton, clearer understanding and biblical use of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit remains concerned about the possibility of abuses that have been seen in the church today. Although the possibility of misuse of the gifts exists, there can also be a reasonable response that will glorify God. My research shows that a church that welcomes the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit as strictly adhering to the biblical teaching is serving God's plan for meeting human needs and reaching this generation by the saving Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For my study I used earnestly the Book of Concord to gain a Lutheran understanding of the theology of the Holy Spirit. In this study, I spent some time with the theology of Martin Luther, a professor of the Bible, a translator of the Bible, and a man with great passion for the true and sound Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. His theology helped me understand the scripture and the Gospel better, especially through Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, and in the Book of Concord. The Lutheran Confessions reflect the scriptural confession that all who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are one in Christ and one with each other, in spite of black or white, male or female, slave or free. According to the Lutheran theology, improper distinctions are not accepted between members of the one holy Christian church (Gal. 3:28). The Lutheran teaching shows that Christians are “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3).

There are many books written on the charismatic movement throughout the history of the Church. The above books describe accurately the work of the Holy Spirit as relevant to my MAP which seeks to develop a proposal and strategy for the implementation of workshops that will advance unity and harmony concerning the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit in the EECMY. My literature review focuses on a biblical and practical understanding of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In above three books, I learned that the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are many and varied capacities for service in the ministry of the church and at least one gift is given to every Christian without exception and the gifts are distributed by gracious will of God. The charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to build up into maturity of the church. From the books I learned also that the Holy Spirit is concerned for the church as well as for the individual Christian. I learned also that unity and diversity of the church are both by the sovereign and

gracious will of God. “We must always remember that the Holy Spirit is concerned for the church as well as for individual Christians. So we must rejoice equally in his Charis (grace) given to all, which makes us one, and in the charismatic (gifts) distributed to all, which make us different. The unity and diversity of the church are both by his appointment.”⁴

⁴ Stott, *Baptism & Fullness*, 118.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROJECT DEVELOPED

Design of the Study

In addition to the literature review, this is also an empirical study based on qualitative and quantitative data sources. To address the objective both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data sources include the respondents among selected parish and congregation leaders. Secondary data include research reports in the same issue done by other scholars and different reports of church units.

Tools and Methods of Data Collection

Information from intended respondents and concerned bodies was gathered through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Questionnaires included information about related identified problems and other related variable information. Since it is unthinkable to collect data for one person, data collectors were selected and trained for two days. In addition to the questionnaires, a one-day workshop analyzed Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT). The data and analysis is explained below.

Methods of Data Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Data will be presented by using descriptive statistics. The data will be presented by tables, pi-charts, and graphs and analyzed by using percentage.

This chapter consists of two parts. First I will discuss my practical methodology, i.e. how I collected information and conducted interviews during the field work. The second part discusses my work with the material, i.e. how I transformed the interviews into data. I will discuss the

narrative analysis and provide an overview of topics that are presented in the following chapters. Further, I will discuss the relationship between narratives and the formation of identity. The main idea is that shared experiences of events shape actors together and provide a sense of belonging, forming their identity as being part of a generation, and these by distinguishing them from others who do not share the same experiences.

In order to learn more about the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit in EECMY/SCES, I conducted qualitative fieldwork from October 2016 to January 2017 (including one month leave in December). I also gathered other secondary, written materials (i.e. from student theses, books in the library, unpublished books and magazines).¹ In addition, I conducted participant observations and I took notes and attended church services and worship services in the Hawassa and Yirgalem area.

Most of the interviews were conducted in the capital city of the southern region, Hawassa, where I live as the Synod president. Many of the people I interviewed either live in Hawassa or were visiting Hawassa. In addition, I conducted fieldwork and traveled to other sites, including Sidama Zone at Aleta Wondo, Bansa, Hagereslam, Chirii, Yergalem, Abela, Wondogenet, Arbegona, Aroressa woredas and parishes in the structure of SCES.

My initial approach in the fieldwork was to follow up with selected target group and personnel in different area of South Central Ethiopia Synod (SCES). The trained Evangelists asked forty people the thirty-six written questions in my list. The Evangelists then sent me the answers given. For interview and questionnaires, we used both the Amharic and Sidama languages. Since I am able to speak and write both languages as well as English, I did not need

¹ During the periods of field work, I have collected materials from the Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary-Addis Ababa, Tabor Evangelical College- Hawassa, The Synod office of South Central Ethiopia Synod= Hawassa and Central office of Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus- Addis Ababa.

any language translator. But I do have a field assistant, Habtewold Ashenafi, who was very important to have networks which can provide new participants. Since I wished to interview people from different age groups, genders, and different religious backgrounds, who were members and ministers in the EECMY, my field assistant assisted me in different situations and places.

During the course of a three month fieldwork, informants had varying accessibility, due to practical factors like workload, travel, preaching and teaching. As I came to focus on informants who were church leaders, workers, pastors and evangelists, I assumed that they could tell stories, not only of their own experiences, but also what other members of their congregations had experienced, as well as different places where events had taken places.

Another reason for this selection was that I could encounter informants who were educated and had knowledge of English, which made it easier for me to conduct interviews. Gender and age were also considered during the interviews.

The interviews were open-ended, including both verbal and non-verbal feedback to the narrators, being silent, showing gestures, smiling and nodding, signaling acceptance and understanding. I sought to encourage the interviewees to tell their story, and then followed up with questions like: “Tell me more about that?” “What was your experience of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit? What do you think was the experience for others?” Before the interviews, I asked for permission to take written notes. These notes were supplemented with field notes containing information about themes such as foundation narratives, ministries, number of adherents and weekly activities, based on meetings that I had with church leaders, pastors, evangelists, and congregation elders.

I am the President of South Central Ethiopia Synod (SCES). Most of my informants are

from my ministry areas. I had no problem being acquainted with people. In the course of the data gathering, I tried to respect and to tell each participant that I will never share potentially sensitive information, such as different views on the use of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, without taking care of the person and the integrity of the individuals and communities involved.

Similar topics were raised in the work with interpreting the interview data. Interviews had a character of personal storytelling, where narratives provided a story in order to give answers to my questions. The story conveys a self-understanding from the narrator's perspective and gave an idea of how the person had developed, or an explanation about a group of people. The narrator selected certain events that have created meaning in their lives and shaped their experiences.

My role in the Synod allows me to observe the worship service and how people are experiencing the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit in the congregations. From 1991 to 2017, I served in EECMY/SCES in different places of the ministry. From 1991 to 1995, I served in HagereSelam Bible School as teacher of Biblical studies. From 1996 to 2006 I served in the Synod office as the coordinator of children and youth ministry program. From 2007 to 2008 I served as Youth Hostel Director and finally from 2008 until now I serve as SCES president. Most of the time I served in the geographical area where the Sidama speaking people were in the majority, which is the SCES service coverage area. However, since I worked in theological institution at HagereSelam Bible School receiving students from almost all peoples in South Ethiopia, my service includes different ethnic groups, religious backgrounds, sexes, and people with different charismatic experiences. Being president in SCES helped me to visit different congregations and personalities in southern Ethiopia. I often visited the local congregations in Abela, Melaga Wondo, Yergalem, Aleta Wondo, Dara, HagereSelam, Arbegona, Bansa,

Areressa and Chiiri areas. During my service as president at the SCES, I weekly visited many congregations in both rural area and the city. I am not able to visit all 1366 congregations organized with thirty parishes in my Synod. During my stay at the SCES office, I got a clear impressions of the tension and even division among the members of the congregation caused by misuse of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. This can be the great ministry challenge for me as the president of SCES.

It is clear that, over the years as I have observed this, the charismatic renewal has brought increased attention to and appreciation for the work of the Holy Spirit. But this attention to charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit has resulted in two opposing camps. One over-emphasizes the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the other believes that such charismatic gifts have completely ceased with the dying of the apostles. These two groups or camps are often worshipping and serving in a single congregation. Therefore, strategies are needed to help the people in the two camps work toward unity and harmony. It is clear that God continues to give gifts to His church. My periods of service in EECMY/SCES continue to give me a unique opportunity for observation and helpful intervention in the reality of church life in the EECMY/SCES.

Key Responses

I trained ten Evangelists how to conduct interviews among congregations, with the intention that each evangelist interview four key informants. Forty people were interviewed. Out of that, 15 are women and 52% are age 16–30. The rest are adult members of the church—ages 30–45, 46–60 and 60+, who are mainly leaders of the congregations. The common response is that all agree that there is disunity due to the understanding and use of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. According to the response, those who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and savior are one in Christ and one with each other. So they reject improper distinctions between members of

the one holy Christian church. They all agree that the charismatic movements tends to create disharmony and disunity within the congregations of the EECMY.

One key informant who is a member of the EECMY Bethal congregation at Hawassa, well-educated and with a lot of experience with youth and elderly people, was asked whether the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit cause tension and division in the EECMY today. He said yes. During 1960s, there was influence from the charismatic movement that introduced new styles of worship in EECMY. This new style of worship created tension, conflict, and even division among the members of the church. There are many, mostly older people, who are complaining about the younger way of worship. This issue has caused conflict for many years in the church. According to the youth group, the old style of worship is challenging and became an issue of tension in the congregations. The informant said that the worship practice led to tensions between the younger and the older in the congregations, and that tension continues.

Another key informant who served as District leader at Abela for thirty-three years and with long experience in EECMY was asked whether speaking in tongues is authentically a true Christian experience. The person interviewed never believes that speaking in tongues is gift of God. He connected it with Satan and Qalicha in Sidama traditional religion. He said such gifts are only for the early church but not in the church today. These kind of gifts only cause conflict and division in the church. I ask many key informants whether all of the Spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament are valid for use in the church today. The response to this question resulted in many different statements of positions and beliefs, which causes tension and conflict in the church. In spite of conflict and tension, the EECMY still experiences growth and expansion. This interview highlights the diversity of the explanations of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit in terms of the relationship between different generations in the church. In the same

account, the person did not deny that there was spiritual and numerical growth that was experienced in the congregations as a result of the charismatic movement.

There was another key informant who worked at the Synod office of EECMY/SCES with good education and born in a Christian family and rich experience of the church leadership. He gave an account of the experience of impact that the charismatic movement on the church especially on outreach evangelism and mission. According to the interview, since the 1960s a number of EECMY pastors, evangelists, leaders of the congregations, and members of the church have become involved in the charismatic movement. As a result this, practices such as speaking in tongues and miraculous healing have been spread within our church body. He also noted that tensions and even divisions over charismatic movement practices appeared in many areas of the Synod, parishes and congregations.

Research Tools and Methodology.

As indicated earlier, this is an empirical study based on qualitative and quantitative data sources. To address the objective both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data sources include the respondents among selected parish and congregation leaders. Secondary data includes research done by other scholars who pursued similar topics and different reports of church units.

For the preparation of the review process, a workshop was held for twenty-five leaders of the parish and congregation from Wondogenet, Melaga, Abela, Yergalem. Aleta Wondo, HagerSelam, Bansa, Arbegona. Chirri and Arroressa parishes. Data collection was held and they then conducted SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat) analyses at all structural levels of the Synod. Furthermore, group discussions and key informant interviews were carried out and necessary data and information was collected. The workshop, held on March 8–11, 2017,

included executive board meeting together with the workshops. This was very important and resulted in great ideas for my research on the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. The collected data was processed and analyzed in percentage and tabular form to make it clear for readers of this research.

Implementation of the Project.

I conducted and analyzed the data in regard to internal and external environment with the use of a SWOT analysis. Observation is the main method for collecting data with this project. In my Synod- South Central Ethiopia Synod, we have 1366 congregations and 30 parishes (EECMY has four basic administrative structures: Central office, Synod, Parish and congregations). As president of the Synod, I am able to visit many congregations and I observed the way of worship and gift of Holy Spirit which members are experiencing. I am also the pastor of one congregation. It is very helpful for me to observe the situation of the believers.

In the process of project implementation, I sent questionnaires to a selected sample of forty key Synod and parish leaders, based on their experience. The questionnaire focused on the nature of the charismatic challenge in the church: What is the challenge and what is the positive impact of charismatic movement in mission and evangelistic outreach and its contribution for fast church growth in Ethiopia. I analyzed the questionnaires received and developed the findings in a systematic way for the final report, which is in chapter five. In order to gain valid and useful information from key Church leaders who participated in the research, I assured them that their responses remain confidential. According to the agreement with the respondent, I did not identify by name only few with permission, and I did not include some details from their response. Before I started the questionnaire, I did have the participants sign informed consent forms, prepared by Concordia Seminary, in which I explain the purpose and methodology of the field

research and give assurance of confidentiality. The participants had the right to withdraw any time from the process.

As I am serving in a Bethel Mekane Yesus congregation, I was able to train twenty-two evangelists to interview different groups of believers, including adult (elderly members), youth group, and women. In these interviews, they asked several questions on my list, addressing: spiritual gifts in the history of redemption, the purpose of spiritual gifts in the New Testament, how many gifts are there, do gifts vary in strength, do Christians possess gifts temporarily or permanently, are gifts miraculous or non-miraculous, and how we discover and seek the spiritual gifts.

The church is not yet in the realm of glory where sin and pain will disappear, but it recognizes that according to the good and gracious will of God it is in a world where sin, sickness, and death are still very evident. The Church also knows that the kingdom of God has been inaugurated, and in this it rejoices, but the final victory has not yet been consummated. Christ died for sin, and its earthly consequences still remain: “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by Him. For the Lord disciplines him whom He loves and chastises every son whom He receives” (Heb. 12:5–6). We do not assume that it is the will of God that even in this life we must be free of all anguish and physical distress, for pain and suffering can also be a blessing from God (See Rom. 8:28).

The Church should not try to manipulate or control God, even with its prayers. The church would hesitate to have in its own hands the power of life and death. With the psalmist the church should confess: “Thou art my God. My times are in Thy hand” (Ps. 31:14–15). In both joy and sorrow, the Church should know that God does not abdicate. While God graciously invites His people to seek His face in confident prayer, He and His will remain sovereign. The church prays

confidently and persistently but with the provision “Lord, if it is Thy will.” His gracious will be done upon us.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE PROJECT EVALUATED

A Findings of the Study

In this chapter the findings of the research will be presented in tables and pie charts based on already explained methodology. These findings include demographic characteristics of respondents, impacts of charismatic gifts in the EECMY, understanding about tongue speaking and baptism with the Holy Spirit, consistency of charismatic gifts with Bible and Lutheran confessions, understanding of special signs and wonders, and the challenge facing the church related to charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. Of the interviewees, 33% are from the Sidama Traditional religious background.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Here I see the age group, sex group, duration of the time in Evangelical belief, and their background before they come to Evangelical Christianity. It helps to understand all categories of people participating in leadership position as well as answering the question.

Table 5.1 explores this reality.

Table: 5.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Age		
16-30	15	37.5
21-45	12	30
46-60	8	20
Above 60	5	12.5
Rather not answer		

Total	40	100
Sex		
Female	9	22.5
Male	31	77.5
Total		100
Duration in Lutheran		
1-5	0	0
6-10	6	15
11-15	9	22
16-20	17	42
21-25	5	13
26-30	2	5
Above 30	1	3
Total	40	100
Religious Background of Respondents		
Roman Catholic	4	10
Pentecostal	0	0
Protestant	3	7.5
Sidama Traditional Religion	33	82.5
Total	40	100

Age of the Respondents: As it is presented in table 5.1, the majority of respondents (37.5%) are youth, with the next largest age group (30%) 21–45 years old. This implies people who are serving in leadership positions of EECMY are young, and the church itself is dominated by people who are less than 45 years of age. Many times young people are open to receive new things and easily experience charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Sex Group of Respondents: The majority (77.5%) is male. This shows that even though the number of believers who are female is more than male believers in the EECMY, according to tradition, the leadership positions of the church is dominated by males. Since my MAP leads me to focus on leaders in different levels, the number of female participants is smaller than male.

Duration in EECMY: The majority (42%) of believers stayed 16–20 years in the EECMY. This shows that how much the leaders are mature and stable in their church due to the love of their own church-EECMY.

5:2: Impact of Charismatic Gifts in EECMY

The questionnaires and interviews covered the impact of charismatic gifts on the church. To find out the impacts on selected group, nine true false questions were sent to the respondents, with the responses presented in table 5.2. The statements were: (1) the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as tongues, divine healing, and prophecy are active today. (2) The charismatic movement is causing divisions within many congregations of the EECMY. (3) There is a problem with the charismatic movement when it claims direct spiritual illuminations apart from the Bible. (4) God promised to reveal His will to us at times directly and immediately apart from the scripture. (5) There are objective promises of the Gospel which we depend on rather than on one's feelings or emotions. (6) When one becomes a child of God through Baptism, the Lord gives him or her the Holy Spirit as a gift. (7) Gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to all baptized Christians. (8) Seeing gifts of the Holy Spirit as only for a select few leads to pride and confusion in the church. (9) You have the gift of the Holy Spirit of speaking in tongues.

Table 5.2: Table Showing Impacts of Charismatic Gifts in EECMY-SCES

Variable	Number of Respondents		Percentage of Majority
	Said True	Said False	
Activity of Gifts of HS	29	11	72.5
Charismatic Movement is causing divisions	31	9	77.5
No problem with Charismatic Movement	17	23	57.5
Revelation apart from scripture	14	26	65
Promise of Gospel rather than ones feeling	25	15	62.5
When one become Gods Child the Lord gives HS	28	12	70
Gifts of HS are given to all baptized Christians	31	9	77.5
Seeing gifts of HS as only for pride and confusion in church	29	11	72.5

You have the gift of HS of speaking in tongues	11	29	72.5
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The question which asks if the gifts of Holy Spirit such as tongues, divine healing and prophecy are active today was intended to learn if spiritual gifts are active or not in this day in the EECMY. The majority (72.5%) of the respondents agreed that spiritual gifts are active in EECMY. The other thing that I wanted to know is whether the charismatic movement is causing division or not. The majority (77.5%) of the respondents agreed that the charismatic movement is causing division within many congregations. The statement, the charismatic movement when it claims direct spiritual illuminations apart from the Bible, was asked to see how people are giving priority to the Bible. The majority (57.5%) disagree with the idea. More people in the church are giving priority to the Bible, though they are experiencing charismatic movements. A similar insight says, “God promised to reveal his will to us at times directly and immediately apart from the Scripture.” Twenty-six of forty (65%) responded false and said God will not promise to reveal his will apart from the Scripture. This shows the understanding level of the believers is good even though the 25% of believers who agreed on this idea is not small. One statement examined baptism, and says when one becomes a child of God through baptism; the Lord gives him or her the Holy Spirit as a gift. The majority (70%) of respondents agrees on the idea. This shows more people have a Lutheran understanding about spiritual gifts in the EECMY. The next question also addressed the same issue, and says the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to all baptized Christians. Seventy-seven percent said true and this also shows the Lutheran understanding of the believers.

The next two questions assess the confusion in the church due to the proper usage of Spiritual gifts. The first question says that seeing the charismatic gifts of Holy Spirit as only for selected few leads to pride and confusion in the church. The majority (72.5%) of respondents

answered true and it shows the existence of pride and confusion in the church due to seeing gifts of the Holy Spirit as only for select few. Among 40 respondents only 27.5% have the gift of speaking in tongues.

To conclude, as we saw from the above responses there are positive and negative impacts in the EECMY resulting from peoples’ positions on the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. Positive impacts include revival for ministry and the proclamation of Gospel. Negative impacts include division within congregations, misunderstanding of Lutheran doctrine by some believers, and creating pride and confusion in the church.

5.3. Understanding about Tongue Speaking and Baptism of the Holy Spirit in EECMY-SCES

The respondents to this questionnaire are mainly EECMY members and leaders of the congregations. The results, as presented in Tables 5.3 and 5.4, reveal that there is a major division in the EECMY concerning the understanding about speaking in tongue and baptism with Holy Spirit.

Table 5.3: Understanding about Tongue Speaking and Baptism of the Holy Spirit in the EECMY-SCES

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
HS gave the gifts of speaking in tongue to the church in apostolic time only		
Totally Disagree	40	100
Somewhat disagree	0	0
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	0	0
Totally agree	0	0
Total	40	100
The HS gives the gift of speaking in tongue to the church today		
Totally Disagree	2	5
Somewhat disagree	2	5
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	7	17.5

Totally agree	29	72.5
Total	40	100
There are two types of baptism: baptism with water & baptism with Holy Spirit		
Totally Disagree	20	50
Somewhat disagree	2	5
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	10	25
Totally agree	8	20
Total	40	100
Baptism with water is necessary for Christian today		
Totally Disagree	4	10
Somewhat disagree	4	10
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	12	30
Totally agree	20	50
Total		
Baptism with the Holy Spirit is necessary for Christian today		
Totally Disagree	0	0
Somewhat disagree	4	10
No option	4	10
Somewhat agree	8	20
Totally agree	24	60
Total	100	100

Analysis of the Data in Light of the Project Hypothesis

For the question which asked if the Holy Spirit gave the gifts of speaking in tongues to the church in apostolic time only, all the respondents (100%) disagreed. They believe that the gift of speaking in tongues is given to the church in apostolic time and now. 72.4% of respondents agreed that the Holy Spirit gives the gift of speaking in tongues to the church today. This implies that the majority of the people have a charismatic view though only 4 (10%) respondents said no and supported the cessationist view. In the case of two types of baptism, 20 (50%) totally disagree and they believe only water baptism. Eight (20%) of the respondents reported that there are two types of baptism. Concerning the necessity of baptism with water for a Christian today, only 8 (20%) responded that it is not necessary, while 32 (80%) believe it is necessary today.

Regarding the necessity of baptism with the Holy Spirit for Christians today, the majority 32 (80%) of respondents reported that it is necessary.

In summary there is division and disagreement in a clear understanding of tongue speaking, water baptism, and Holy Spirit baptism. Though the majority of the respondents among EECMY leaders believe only water baptism is acceptable and enough for salvation, some members responded that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is necessary today as the continuation from the early church. To understand the biblical use of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, there remains concern about the possibility of abuses that have been witnessed and practiced by many members of EECMY congregations. Recognizing the possibility of abuse, there is a reasonable response that will honor God and His gifts of the Holy Spirit. Members of EECMY welcome the power of the Holy Spirit as strictly adhering to the Bible and Lutheran Confessions and it is God’s plan for meeting human needs and reaching out with the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ.

5.4. Consistency of Charismatic Movement with Bible and Lutheran teaching in EECMY-SCES

To assess the consistency between the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit with the teaching of the Bible and Lutheran Confessions, statements related with proclamation of Gospel, the purpose of speaking tongues, biblical teaching and the Lutheran confession were given.

Table 5.4: Table Showing Consistency of Charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit with Bible and Lutheran Confessions in EECMY-SCES

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
The Church ministry is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world		
Totally Disagree	0	0
Somewhat disagree	0	0
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	0	0
Totally agree	40	100

Total	40	40
The HS gives the gift of speaking in tongues to the church to empower her for ministry		
Totally Disagree	5	12.5
Somewhat disagree	7	17.5
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	12	30
Totally agree	16	40
Total	40	100
The Charismatic movement is consistent with bible teaching		
Totally Disagree	7	17.5
Somewhat disagree	9	22.5
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	10	25
Totally agree	14	35
Total	40	40
Charismatic movement is contrary to the reformation principle of grace alone, faith alone and scripture alone		
Totally Disagree	13	32.5
Somewhat disagree	15	37.5
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	5	12.5
Totally agree	7	17.5
Total	40	100
Speaking with tongues is authentically a true Christian experience		
Totally Disagree	13	32.5
Somewhat disagree	8	20
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	13	32.5
Totally agree	6	15
Total	40	100
The gifts of HS are not a means of grace		
Totally Disagree	0	0
Somewhat disagree	0	0
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	0	0
Totally agree	40	100
Total	40	100

As it is presented above in table 5.4, all (100%) respondents believe that the purpose of church ministry is to proclaim the Gospel. Twenty-eight (70%) respondents also believe the Holy Spirit gives the gift of speaking in tongues to the church to empower her for ministry. Twenty-

four (60%) respondents reported that the charismatic movement is consistent with the Bible and the Lutheran confessions. In other related questions, I tried to understand whether the charismatic movement is contrary to the Reformation principles of grace alone, faith alone, and scripture alone. Twenty-eight (70%) reported that it is not contrary. I also asked if speaking with tongues is an authentically true Christian experience. For this question, 22 (52.5%) of respondents did not agree. Forty (100%) of the respondents believed that the gift of Holy Spirit is not a means of grace.

5.5. Understanding Special Signs and Wonders in EECMY-SCES

In this topic the understanding of believers about special signs and wonders is presented in table 5.5 and analyzed. The variables presented and analyzed in this topic include: if especial signs and wonders are guarantees of the Holy Spirit dwelling, if the faith in Christ eliminates illness from Christians, if the gifts of the Holy Spirit include one's natural talent and gifts, if the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are helpful in EECMY-SCES as well as evangelistic outreach work in the church and, if EECMY has a heritage of Spirit theology. Each issue is analyzed under table 5.5

Table 5.5: Table Showing Understanding about Especial Signs and Wonders in EECMY-SCES

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Special signs and wonders are guarantees that the spirit of God dwells within an individual		
Totally Disagree	30	75
Somewhat disagree	5	12.5
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	2	5
Totally agree	3	7.5
Total	40	100
Faith in Christ does not eliminate illness from the life of Christian		

Totally Disagree	4	10
Somewhat disagree	4	10
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	5	12.5
Totally agree	28	70
Total	40	100
The gifts of HS include ones natural gifts and talents		
Totally Disagree	3	7.5
Somewhat disagree	4	10
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	7	17.5
Totally agree	26	65
Total	40	100
Charismatic movement in EECMY is helpful for church growth		
Totally Disagree	0	0
Somewhat disagree	0	0
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	10	25
Totally agree	30	75
Total	40	100
EECMY has rich heritage of sprit theology in its confession		
Totally Disagree	0	0
Somewhat disagree	0	0
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	10	25
Totally agree	30	75
Total	40	100
The charismatic movement is not essential for evangelistic outreach work in the church		
Totally Disagree	31	77.5
Somewhat disagree	9	22.5
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	0	0
Totally agree	0	0
Total	40	100

As agreed by 35 (87.5%) of the respondents, special signs and wonders are not a guarantee that the Holy Spirit dwells within an individual. Concerning the elimination of illness, 33 (82.5%) of respondents agreed that faith in Christ does not eliminate illness. About natural gifts and talents 33 (82.5%) of the respondents reported that the gifts of Holy Spirit include natural

gifts and talents. Concerning benefits of the charismatic movement for the growth of the EECMY and outreach ministry of the church, in both questions, 100% of the respondents believed the movement benefits church ministry and evangelistic outreach. Mekane Yesus church also has heritage of the Holy Spirit theology as reported by all respondents.

Special signs and wonders are essential for the growth of the EECMY and evangelistic outreach work of the church. It is clear from the research that thousands have come to know Jesus Christ as their personal savior and Lord through preaching the Word. According to the New Testament, apostles themselves prayed that God would confirm their message with the works of the power of the Holy Spirit. Wonders and signs are essential to preach the Gospel more powerfully to win more people to Jesus Christ. As God used the miraculous power to confirm the message of the apostles, He also uses the miraculous power today to confirm the Gospel message and helpful for evangelistic outreach ministry and church growth.

5.6. Challenges the Church Faces Related with Usage of Charismatic Gifts

There are some challenges analyzed based on collected data on table 5.6. To dig out the challenges the researcher asked respondents whether gifts of healing is one of God's ways of confirming the proclamation of gospel, whether prophecy in the church today is part from the scripture itself, whether we need prayer to get the gifts of Holy Spirit, whether the gift of Holy Spirit is given to all believers because of the grace of God or not. In addition, the consequence of seeing gifts of Holy Spirit only for a select few, was assessed and examined. Finally, the understanding of role of Holy Spirit is presented and analyzed under table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Table Showing Challenges the Church Facing Related With Usage of Charismatic Gifts

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
The gifts of healing is one of God's way of confirming the truth of proclamation of Gospel		
Totally Disagree	0	0
Somewhat disagree	0	0
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	7	17.5
Totally agree	33	82.5
Total	40	100
There are prophecies in the church today apart from the scripture it self		
Totally Disagree	0	0
Somewhat disagree	0	0
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	7	17.5
Totally agree	33	82.5
Total	40	100
We do not need prayers to get the gifts of the HS		
Totally Disagree	31	77.5
Somewhat disagree	6	15
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	2	5
Totally agree	1	2.5
Total	40	100
The gift of HS is given to all believers only by the grace of God, not because of any effort on the part of the recipient		
Totally Disagree	4	10
Somewhat disagree	3	7.5
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	7	17.5
Totally agree	26	65
Total	40	100
Seeing the gifts of the HS as only for a select few leads to pride and confusion in the church		
Totally Disagree	0	0
Somewhat disagree	3	7.5
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	9	22.5
Totally agree	28	70
Total	40	100
Speaking in tongues causes divisions among members of the Church		
Totally Disagree	0	0
Somewhat disagree	0	0
No option	0	0

Somewhat agree	0	0
Totally agree	40	100
Total	40	100
The HS produces fellowship of believers of the body of Christ which produces unity		
Totally Disagree	0	0
Somewhat disagree	0	0
No option	0	0
Somewhat agree	0	0
Totally agree	40	100
Total	40	100

Every respondent agreed that the gift of healing is one of God’s ways of confirming the proclamation of Gospel. Every respondent also agreed that prophecy in the church today can be apart from scripture itself. The researcher asked if we need the prayer to get the gift of the Holy Spirit, 92.5% agreed. Eighty-two and a half percent of the respondents believe that the gift of Holy Spirit is given to all believers only by the grace of God, not because of any effort on the part of the recipient. Even though the respondents agreed that gifts of the Holy Spirit are given only by grace of God, 36 (92.5%) of respondents reported that seeing the gifts of the Holy Spirit for a select few leads to pride and confusion in the church. Every respondent also reported that speaking in tongues causes divisions among members of the church. The results here indicate clearly the challenge that exists to maintain unity and harmony. To explore more about the severity of the challenge seeing the gift of the Holy Spirit as only for a select few and divisions to tongue speaking I used the following bar chart.

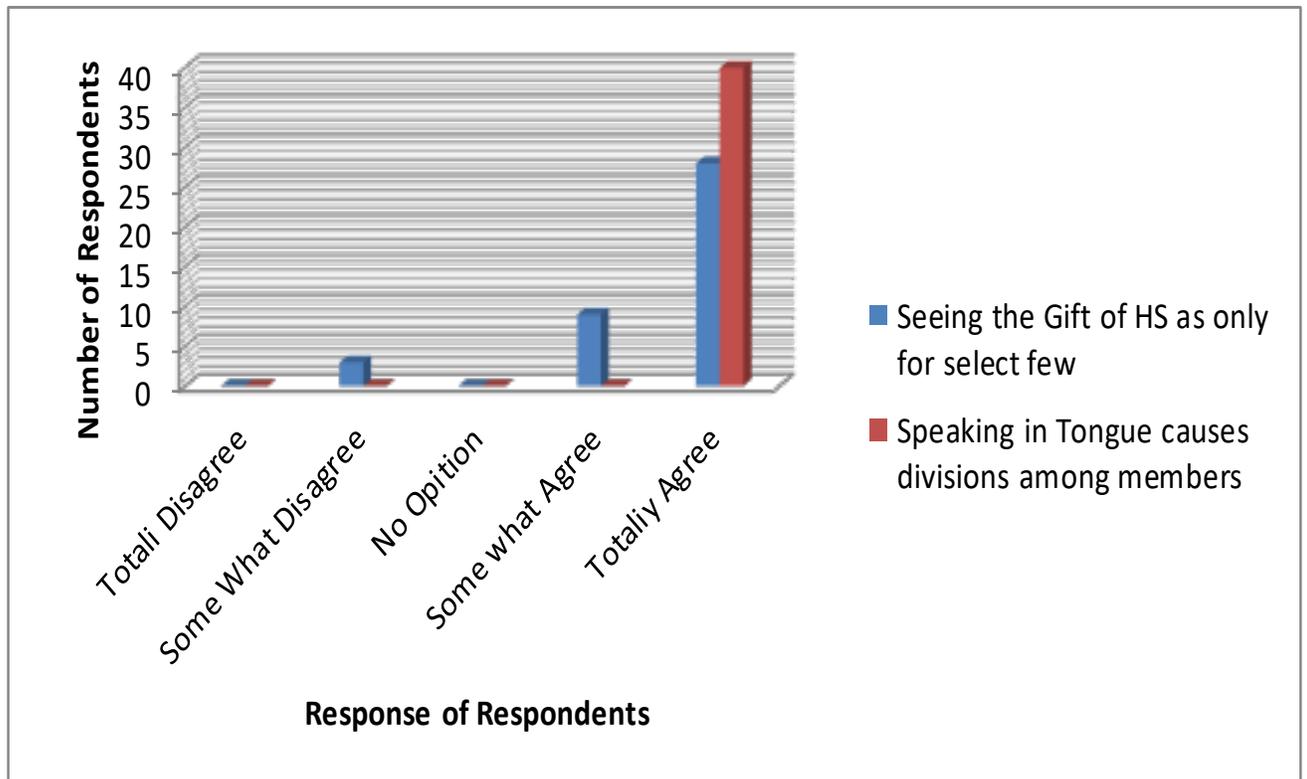


Fig. 5.6.1 Showing the Severity of the Challenge of Seeing the Gift of the Holy Spirit only for Select Few and Division Caused Due to Speaking in Tongue

As it is easily presented in above bar chart, seeing the gift of the Holy Spirit only for select few and division due to tongue speaking is main challenge related with charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit.

When we come back to table 5.6 for the statement given to respondents, which says, the Holy Spirit produces fellowship between believers, 40 (100%) of respondents agreed. When we compare the above statements with this they seem contradictory. But the reality shows that charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit have both strong side and weak side. Therefore, I wanted to do a SWOT analysis with a workshop of twenty-five members and presented as follows.

5.7. SWOT Analysis Related with Charismatic Gifts of the Holy Spirit in EECMY-SCES

The experience of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit was evaluated by Strength, weakness; opportunity and traits (SWOT) according to EECMY-SCES.

5.7.1. Strengths of the use of Charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit

- The number of believers is growing rapidly due to charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit
- It is highly accelerating the outreach evangelism work within the church and beyond
- The burden of people is being overcome and some people are set free from their illness
- It is helping the church by confirming the truth of the proclamation of the gospel
- The gifts of the Holy Spirit are edifying as the Bible teaches in some congregations

5.7.2. Weaknesses of the use of the Charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit

- Charismatic Movement is causing tension and even division within the congregations
- It is violating true Biblical teaching and Lutheran Confessions
- Seeing gifts of the Holy Spirit as only for a select few is leading to pride and confusion in the church
- People are regarding ministers to be in place of God and sometimes prior to God
- People are only focusing on their worldly life like health, and wealth, and forgetting eternal life and God's grace
- Some people are forgetting the authenticity of the Bible and focus on direct revelation

5.7.3. Opportunity of Charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit

- EECMY has a heritage of true theology to teach about the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Lutheran Confession does not deny the proper usage of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit

- The church has ample ministers who have a variety of spiritual and natural gifts and talents
- People are ready to learn the truth of the Bible and Lutheran Confession

5.7.4. Threats of Charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit

- It may lead to different heretical teaching and lead believers astray from the sound teaching of the Church
- Denying the reality of the gifts of the Holy Spirit may lead the leaders of the church to unwanted extremes unless handled pastorally and wisely to create the unity and harmony in the church

Work on for Unity and Harmony with in EECMY

On the basis of the above research, the EECMY understands that there is a division among the members of church, and there is a need to work for unity and harmony to fulfil the mission of God. The EECMY is a missional church witnessing the Lord Jesus Christ to the whole world. We understand that the Holy Spirit must give witness to the believer that they are children of God. As the result the Kingdom of God will expand, preaching of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the entire world.

As analyzed above, the findings of this project include the answers to the questionnaires and interviews. Besides the field research, the bibliographic research is also helpful to conclude the findings of the project. The data was collected and analyzed and finally the findings were displayed in a clear and understandable way. The field research was focused on the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit and the disunity in church caused by the misunderstanding of the gifts, which are now generally called the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit and which are being claimed today by many members of EECMY as well as in traditional Pentecostal groups. As

seen above, the summary of findings was displayed in the form of tables and charts. My aim in this project is to help the church to have unity and harmony among members and have good biblical understanding and experience of the Holy Spirit. A summary of the views like cessations and that of continuations¹ were clearly shown as the findings of the study. In my analysis, I attempted to be fair to display the outcomes without inclining to one side of the views. But I understand that the readers of my MAP may quickly note that I am not neutral as I am Lutheran in my personal doctrinal identity being member and leader in one of the EECMY Synods. The data from questionnaires and interviews and from bibliographic research was broadly identified.

In the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church is called to proclaim faithfully the whole teaching of Christ and to share the good news of the kingdom—the totality of apostolic faith, life, and witness—with every one throughout the entire world. Thus, the church seeks faithfully to proclaim and live the love of God for all, and to fulfill Christ’s mission for the salvation and transformation of the world, to the glory of God.

God restores and enriches communion with humanity, granting eternal life in God’s Triune Being. Through redeemed humanity, the whole world is meant to be drawn to the goal of restoration and salvation. This divine plan reaches its fulfillment in the new heaven and the new earth in God’s holy kingdom. “Healings, exorcisms, tongues, prophesy are merely the spectacular tip of the iceberg, the heart of which is a living, loving, believing Christian fellowship.”²

God has given Himself to and for the world to reconcile it to Him. Supremely and truly,

¹ There are two extreme views concerning charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. The cessationist view believes that certain gifts (typically those specifically mentioned in 1 Cor. 12: 7–11, generally identified as the miraculous gifts), ceased long ago, when the apostles died and scripture was complete. But the continuationist (also sometimes called a non-cessation) view does not believe scripture supports this view.

² Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 14.

God in Christ has become a human being. He lived among His people as a real flesh and blood human being. It is this incarnate Lord who decides the meaning, mission, and purpose of the community that calls itself by His name. God acts and speaks in Jesus Christ through whom His own true divinity is expressed precisely in His true humanity. By living in and with His people, Jesus transforms the lives of His people.

The true community of Jesus Christ is the community that God has sent out into the world. He Himself is the foundation of that community. How could a church exist for the world and not yet be of the world? Christ's church exists for others. It is not "of the world," even though it is "in the world" (John 17:11), even as He who sends it forth with plenary divine power is not of the world (John 17:16). Nor is the power that sustains the community in its mission of the world. Through the members of the body of Christ living in the people of this world, the Spirit brings a tremendous change in the lives of many. God has placed His people in the midst of people of many different cultures and languages in order to bring His life to those whose lives have been ruined by all kinds of distress and suffering.

I found many publications on charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit for my bibliographic research which I can find in the Seminary library and online. My field research gave me deeper understanding in the topic and helped me to come to real findings and summary. It is my belief that my study will help the leaders of the EECMY by providing the clear guidelines for further study and also bring about the unity and harmony which was caused by the experience of charismatic gifts of Holy Spirit. As I am president of the Synod, I had the time constraint which happened during the research period. The limited time and space for this vast study was my main challenge as I am doing my research on the strategy for the implementation of workshops that will advance unity and harmony concerning gifts the Holy Spirit in the EECMY.

It is the Holy Spirit who convicts sinners of their sin and guilt, opens their eyes to see Christ, draws them to Him, enables them to repent and believe, and implants life in their dead souls. Before Christ sent the Church into the world, He sent the Holy Spirit to the church. In the upper room, Jesus emphasized that the distinctive work of the Holy Spirit, whom the Father was sending to make the Son known. The Holy Spirit, above all else, would delight in glorifying and making manifest the Son (John 16:14). In this spread of the Gospel throughout the world, the Holy Spirit would be the chief witness. “He will bear witness to me.” Only after saying this, did Jesus add to His apostles, “and you also are witnesses” (John 15:26–27).

Strategies Developed to Handle Pastorally the Use of the Charismatic Gifts of the Holy Spirit to Create Unity and Harmony in the EECMY

On the basis of my research, several strategies were developed to handle pastorally the use of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit to create unity and harmony in the church. As stated above the EECMY carries out the mission work within the country and beyond, thus the church is a missional church, a church that goes or moves to reach unreached people and areas.

1. The missional church proclaims the Gospel. It is our first strategy that we focus on the Bible — Word of God. The story of God’s salvation is faithfully repeated and preached in a multitude of ways. This task is the task of the church. The members of the church must return to the Bible and to find nourishment in God’s word for their lives as God’s children.
2. There is recognition that the church itself is an incomplete expression of the reign of God. There is a widely held perception that this church is going somewhere- and that “somewhere” is a more faithfully lived life in the reign of God. This means the church is still waiting for the “not yet” kingdom of God.
3. In our strategy, we focus on discipleship. The missional church is a community is

which all members are involved in learning to become disciples of Jesus. Since all church members are disciples by definition, growth in discipleship is expected of all the people of God. All must experience what it means to be a disciple of the Lord. The public worship in the church brings the members into total expectant dependence on the Holy Spirit.

4. The community has an important public witness. The church makes an observable impact that contributes to the transformation of life, society, and human relationships through preaching and through diaconal and social service.
5. The Bible is normative in the life of EECMY. The members of the church meet together to read the Bible together in order to learn what they can learn nowhere else—God’s good and gracious intent for all creation, the mystery of salvation, and the identity and purpose of their life together. A participatory style of public worship in the congregation of praise and prayer are very important in the life of the EECMY.
6. Worship is the central act in EECMY by which the members celebrates with joy and thanksgiving both God’s presence and God’s promised future. In our strategy, there must be a significant and meaningful engagement in communal worship of God, reflecting appropriately and addressing the culture of those who worship together.
7. It is another strategy that we focus on love and peace in the congregations. The church understands itself as different from the world because of its participation in the life, death, and resurrection of its Lord. In its corporate life and public witness, the church is consciously seeking to conform its life to the Lord instead of to the conflicting demands and lifestyles of the surrounding cultures. It is very important to use spiritual gifts for ministry in the church by every member to edify the body of God.

8. It is another strategy that the church practice hospitality; welcoming the stranger into the midst of the community plays a central role in the church's mission and have the forum for charismatic preachers to share experience.
9. In our strategy, the EECMY seeks to discern God's specific missional vocation for the entire community and for all of its members. It is also our culture that a communal lifestyle is very important for the ministry. So the EECMY has made "mission" its priority and in overt and communal ways seeks to be and do "what God is calling us to know, be, and do."
10. People within one congregation must hold themselves accountable to one another in love. To give enough time to spend with one another for the purpose of watching over one another in love and to build one another's life to create unity and harmony.
11. As missional church, EECMY must be characterized by how Christians behave toward one another. Acts of self-sacrifices on behalf of one another, both in the church and in the local community, are characteristics of a missional church. An active commitment by the members of the EECMY to reach out to the needy in evangelism and social service is very important for the growth of the church as EECMY implements its Holistic moto –serving the whole person- both physical and spiritual needs.
12. It must be our strategy to focus on teaching in short way like workshops and also long term study in Bible Schools and Theological Seminaries. The EECMY is the church that practice reconciliation and peace among the members and the community to bring about unity and harmony in the church.

How the EECMY Pastorally Handles the Challenge of the Charismatic Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1. The church leaders, pastors, evangelists, and lay congregation elders are exhorted to

prayerfully study the Word of God and its exposition in the Lutheran Confessions and to carefully govern the use of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit taking care to correct any abuse of any gifts in the life of Christian, in accordance with biblical teaching.

2. The church should accept those members who claim the experience of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit as EECMY members and teach them the word of God and instruct them how they should use their experience and their gifts in a harmonious, edifying manner in their local congregations.
3. The church believes and so should continue to clearly teach that a person is saved by faith alone, even as the Ethiopian Christians have been delivered from the oppression of Satan and their economic burdens through the power of Jesus Christ. It is through faith in Jesus Christ that people are saved, and not through the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit.
4. The members of the church should admonish and encourage one another with love and patience. The wonderful gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the Bible are also being given to God's people today. However, God's people must seek them according to the sovereign will of God.
5. As we recognize, in certain areas of the church, where tensions and even divisions due to the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit have arisen, the church leaders should warn gently and encourage one another with love and patience. And those Christians who claim that they received the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit should evaluate their gifts not by personal feelings and emotions but in the light of the Word of God.
6. It is very important to devote greater attention to the work of the Holy Spirit, who is responsible for the rapid and widespread growth of the church today. Since the Spirit

comes to the church in Word and Sacrament, the church must use the Word and Sacrament at every level of its ministry so that the church members may have a renewed sense of joy, peace, and power that God has promised.

7. As we receive the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, and exercise them in the church, we have to be aware that spiritual pride or undisciplined enthusiasm may cause serious offense to the Body of Christ. Thus, the members must pray and work to edify the church and not to be a cause for division of the congregations.
8. The charismatic movement is playing a significant role in the growth of EECMY. The important aspects in the charismatic movement influencing church growth are love and zeal for others, prayers, Christian living in harmony with others, relevant and good teaching, voluntary ministers, and the place and role of the Bible in healing and exorcism. This is the positive side of charismatic movement. Before the charismatic movement become influential in the EECMY, the church was growing both inwardly (Spiritually) and outwardly. Consequently, this tells us that we need to focus on various aspects, positive as well as negative, of the charismatic movement for understanding its effects on church growth. I hope this strategy developed can help the church at large and the EECMY that we pastorally handle the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit within the church to use it for mission and evangelistic outreach for church growth for the glory of God and bring about the unity and harmony within the EECMY congregations.
9. The church and its teaching must resist false teachers and witness to what we believe to be the truth of the scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Some of the ideas that are false include:

They said that God desires every Christian to have second experience of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit which is needed for salvation.

The false teachers also say that God promises every Christian to possess such gifts as speaking in tongues, healing, discerning of spirits, and prophesy to complete God's promise.

We understand that it is not true to say that the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are external signs by which we can assure ourselves that we have faith and have salvation.

It is the teaching of the false prophet that the inner religious experience is necessary for, or should be sought by Christians in order that they may be certain about having faith and salvation. They also said that it is lack of faith if healing does not occur and God promises healing and health to every Christian in this life.

It is the claim of false teacher that God gives guidance and leadership to the church today outside of the Bible through visions and dreams or direct prophecy.

We also fight against with false prophets as they said that the sanctification of a believer is incomplete unless he possesses the gift of speaking in tongues and other charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

Contribution to the Ministry

The project findings, the description and summary might be used by the leaders of the EECMY. It can help pastors, evangelists, and church leaders by creating awareness and providing theological and biblical understanding about charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit and help the ministry of the church and for further leadership and service.

As the findings and issues raised in the research become helpful for leaders of the EECMY, we should seek the edification and spiritual welfare of the whole body of Christ. All pastors and laymen should earnestly and prayerfully study scripture and its exposition in the Lutheran Confessions. Through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, we will be able to discern between what is true and sound teaching and what is false, what is God's will and what is of men. It is true that subjective experience and human emotions are never safe guides in spiritual matters. Our true guide is the Word of God. Where God's Word speaks, Christians will submit in all humility and in the fear of God and not follow just personal experience.

The research can make a great contribution to the ministry in order to understand the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. My studies deal with not only with those passages in Mark, Acts, and 1 Corinthians that speak of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, but with those activities of the Holy Spirit that are written in other books of the New Testament such as John, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and Colossians. The study concentrates on the Gospel as a source of strength, peace, and joy in the life of the Christian. In the scripture we see again the rich benefits and blessings that God gives through the Word and the Sacraments to His people.

I think prayerful study is needed of those biblical passages that show the church militant in its struggle against all the forces of evil in this world and that the kingdom of God has been inaugurated but not yet consummated. In the Ethiopian context the church continues to exist in a state of lowliness and at times even of persecution during the communist regime. It is clear that God does not promise us to escape the evils of the day, but he does assure us of his gracious presence to the end of time, “I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Matt. 28:20), and promises that the church will be preserved and will grow through preaching the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ and the administration of the Sacraments. The church lives in the hope of inheritance in heaven “The Lord will rescue me from every evil and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever” (2 Tim. 4:18). In this hope the Church will find joy and peace as it given to serve the Lord with the abilities and talents the Holy Spirit gives.

It is very important to admonish and encourage one another with love and patience as members of Christ's body who are sincerely interested in the spiritual well-being of our brethren. “We must always remember that the Holy Spirit is concerned for the church as well as for individual Christians. So we must rejoice equally in his Charis (grace) given to all, which makes us one, and in the charismata (gifts) distributed to all, which make us different. The unity and diversity of the Church are both by his appointment.”¹ Hopefully, as this research makes a contribution to the ministry in order to keep unity and harmony in the church, we should take great care when misunderstanding happens because of conduct or doctrine that is contrary to God's Word through practice of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Care should also be taken that proper brotherly procedures are followed and that the reasons for admonition or discipline are fully understood. The church admonition, encouragement and discipline are always evangelical and

¹ Stott, *Baptism & Fullness*, 118.

have as their goal the restoration of the brother and sister in the Christian community.

This research is also helpful for ministry so that Christians must take seriously the warnings of the Bible, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). The Bible particularly urges the church to test occurrences that give the appearance of being valid signs and wonders, with the reminder that in the last days false prophets will arise who will seek to lead God's elect astray by such means: “For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to astray, if possible, even the elect” (Matt. 24:24). So the research has great contribution to the ministry as it helps to create understanding that the church must not focus on health and wealth Gospel but on grace of God: “Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:23–24).

Contribution to Personal and Professional Growth

Through working on this research, I learned a lot about the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit and the tension and division in the church and how can I serve the church in this situation. It helps me to understand more about charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit and encourages me to continue in my leadership as the president of SCES. We have 1366 congregations in SCES and 1.2 million members. Seventy-five percent are young, many of whom are experiencing the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. This is a ministry challenge for me. I learned how I can pastorally handle the situation for better growth of the church. I gained a new understanding of the nature of conversion and the effects this divine act produces in the hearts and lives of believers through the process of the interviews.

As some members of the church are convinced that they have received the charismatic gifts

of the Holy Spirit, I seek to evaluate and determine their validity not only on the basis of personal feelings and emotions but especially in the light of Scripture. I learned that there are two extremes in understanding of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are cessations and continuations. Through this research, I am able to understand the necessity of the Sovereignty and power of the Holy Spirit in my life as well as in the ministry of the body of Christ. I also grasp the truth that “all things have been created by Him and for Him” (Col. 1:16), and that the power of the Holy Spirit, as revealed in gifts of the Holy Spirit, are given primarily to enable me for ministry of the church in leadership and as evangelistic outreach ministry. I learned also how to live a holy life and to glorify God for His gift. Through this study, I am able to recognize that the gifts of the Holy Spirit can result in abuses, counterfeits, and perversions. But I also learned that the misuse and abuses of the gifts of the Holy Spirit do not make the gifts itself invalid, that the abuse of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit does not mean that I should prohibit the proper use of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is my understanding that the manifestation of any gifts of the Holy Spirit must follow the Biblical guidelines such as those found in 1 Corinthians 14.

I personally learned also how to write and research for further studies. I developed personal relationship with many Christians which is very much helpful for my ministry as the president of the Synod.

Recommendations

1. I recommend that we should have clear understanding that we are justified by faith alone through the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. It is clear that by faith we accept God’s forgiveness on account of Christ, and this is the work of God’s Spirit through the external means of grace, namely, the preaching of the Gospel,

Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, and the Lord's Supper. Through these external means of grace the Holy Spirit works faith in our heart when and where it pleases God and it is given to those who believe through these external means of grace the Holy Spirit, together with all that is necessary for life and salvation.

3. In the church, we should teach that the forgiveness of our sins because of death of Christ and by faith we accept that God's promised gift in the Gospel, is our righteousness before God.

4. Without special experience of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, faith is the confident assurance that for Christ's sake we are forgiven and accepted by God as righteous and through faith in the promise of God the accusing voice of conscience and Satan was avoided and the troubled heart finds rest in Jesus Christ the Savior. So we fight against the false teaching contrary to the Bible which we realize today and it is dangerous to a person's salvation. For the unity of the church, those members who claim to have the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit should be accepted as EECMY members and be given proper instruction from God's Word as to how they should live with their gifts and experiences in a harmonious, edifying manner in the local congregation to bring the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ within the country and beyond.

Recommended Guidelines for Congregations and Pastors

Suggestions for Pastors who are experiencing the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit in EECMY:

The pastors should study the spiritual needs of their congregation and they have to emphasize that it is the Holy Spirit who brings us to faith and gives us the joy, the assurance, the peace, and the love for one another which are marks of the Christian. The Holy Spirit also strengthens God's people by leading them through great struggle and anguish and he gives these

blessings upon us only through the means of grace. The charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit such as speaking in tongues, miracles of healing, and any of the other referred to in 1 Corinthians 12 were not given for the purpose of making God more real to man, nor to assure him of God's love, to give power for witnessing, or to bring about a renewal in the church. But they are all signs that Christ had sent His Spirit to his children. In Ethiopia, the Holy Spirit continues to energize ministers for his mission. "The world is changing too fast around us to continue to overlook the power source that the apostle Paul relied on for the growth of the early church. The Spirit continues to energize new churches in other parts of the world."²

The pastors should study with their congregational members about the work of the Holy Spirit as described in such books of the Bible as the Gospel of John, Romans, First Corinthians, Galatians, and Ephesians in order to bring the important fact to the attention of the people for sound teachings. Pentecostal literature operates with Pentecostal presuppositions and views. Through Biblical study, the pastors are able to criticize the false teaching that says growth in the church is produced by the signs of the Spirit, such as divine healing and speaking in tongues only and they should encourage their members of the congregation to exercise more fully their right and responsibility to participate in the spiritual service of the church. In order to create unity and harmony in the church, the pastors should emphasize evangelism and recall that God-pleasing opportunities for ministry which include mutual exhortation and instruction and also service to one another. For unity of the church, the pastors should encourage the laity to take a more meaningful part in the program of the church and it gives great harmony as the laity seeks for increased opportunities to serve their Savior with the gifts God has given them.

The pastors should also give more emphasis to the benefits of Holy Baptism. They should

² Luecke, *Your Encounters with the Holy Spirit*, 32.

constantly remind their congregations that Holy Baptism is a means of grace which gives great blessings not only in our childhood but throughout our life. Holy Baptism grants us the forgiveness of sins throughout our life and but also assures us of God's presence and His love. Through Baptism, we have the fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22–23). It gives Christians the desire and the strength to live as children of God and grants to us the Holy Spirit with His gifts. And they also emphasize the Lord's Supper and its blessings, as grants to all Christian the spiritual blessings and guarantee the presence of God, the assurance of His grace and love, the power to live as children of God, love and appreciation for His Word, and power to witness to Christ..

As the movement of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit grew in the church today, the pastors should look again at the orders of worship to insure warmth and fellowship and able to find other opportunities for fellowship by offering guidance how to proceed in a positive, evangelical manner rather than offending it. Just for the sake of unity and harmony in the church, the admonition and discipline are to be administered in such a way as not to give the impression that the church is persecuting those who are experiencing the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The church should arrange the forum for the pastors experiencing the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, who are leading congregations into the charismatic movement, and those who are teaching the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as believed in our church on the basis of the Bible and the our Lutheran Confessions.

As arranging the forum for charismatic preachers, we must discuss the basic issues with those who experience the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, and not treat them as emotionally unstable. Therefore, in dealing with a charismatic, whether pastor or layman, we seek to discover his/her needs and apply Law and Gospel properly. If someone needs assurance of his acceptance

by God we should remind him that all people have been fully accepted in God's grace by the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, rather than looking to such extraordinary gifts as speaking in tongues and healing as signs of assurance of acceptance by God. The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ also gives us the power we need to live a life of commitment to the Savior and we need no other power either to build the church or to give purpose to our lives.

The EECMY pastor who experiences the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit should be advised to read Lutheran commentaries and the Bible and they should be allowed time to think the matter through with prayer and the study of Holy Scripture. For our unity and harmony, they should be encouraged to bring their concerns to their brethren at pastoral conferences. But when these pastors or church leaders consistently divide the people in their churches, utilizing differing understandings of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to provoke that division, we must take seriously the possibility of bringing them under church discipline.

The pastors should discuss with brothers and sisters their views concerning the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit and take seriously the concerns expressed by those brothers and sisters. They should also consider carefully and seriously how the experience of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit reduces the importance of the sacrament of Holy Baptism within the charismatic movement.

The pastors should carefully remember that the Lutheran Confessions warn against all forms of subjectivism which imply that the Holy Spirit deals directly with a person apart from Word and sacraments. They should read prayerfully and with an open mind the Holy Bible and give serious consideration to the fact that spectacular signs such as tongues, divine healing, and prophecy may actually tend to draw attention away from the Gospel of forgiveness and center it instead on physical healings, on unintelligible language, or on prophesying for future events in

one's life. We should consider seriously the false teaching placing too much emphasis on signs and miracles, and carefully observe the seriousness of disturbing a congregation with doctrine contrary to that which the church confesses on the basis of the Scriptures and our Lutheran Confessions. This creates tension and even divisions in the congregations.

For our unity and harmony in the EECMY, the pastors should avoid an attitude of spiritual superiority which makes the members of their congregation who are not charismatic feel they are inferior Christians and keep the church emphasis on the centrality of the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. This means that they should preach the Gospel that our Lord Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world and it also includes the emphasis that the Holy Spirit edifies the church through the means of grace rather than through signs and miracles.

Developing workshops is another strategy to direct towards common concern among the leaders for the Bible as the norm of Christian belief and practice in the church. Developing teaching materials to train synod leaders so that they can conduct workshops to bring attitudinal and behavioral change among leaders of EECMY by creating clear understanding on the use and function of charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. The workshop outline focuses on the five gifts-offices from Lord Jesus Christ. The goal of the workshops is to create unity and harmony in the church. The research helped me to prepare teaching materials and helped me to have clear understanding and able to put in the workshop.

As stated by John Stott,

We have seen that the gifts are many and varied capacities for service; that at least one is given to every Christian without exception; that they are distributed by the sovereign, gracious will of God, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit; and that they are intended 'for the common good', to build up into maturity Christ's body, the church. So let us employ our gifts for one another, as good stewards of God's varied

grace...in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.³

The EECMY has a rich heritage of the theology of the Holy Spirit in its confessions, hymn books, and prayers. As the EECMY seeks to fulfill its mission in the country and in the world, it thanks God for the renewed interest which many Christians in many congregations show to the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit led us into all truth as He has promised and continue to help church to bear witness about our Lord Jesus Christ. The Church confidently trusts that God will breathe new life into it everywhere, calling sinners to repentance, creating in them through the Word a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, working in them the desire and the strength to serve their Savior in newness of life, and sustaining them in this faith as we and all Christians everywhere wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of John, Jesus said that through Him we have spiritual life and strength, assurance and hope, for He has promised: "I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever" (John 14:16). Let us all pray for the unity and harmony in the church to fulfil God's mission.

³ Stott, *Baptism & Fullness*, 119.

APPENDIX ONE

COPY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The first group – Group 1 is true/false questions and the second group- group II asks you to answer according to a 5 point scale, with “1” being “Definitely disagree” to “5” being “Definitely Agree”.

Please answer as honestly as you can.

BEFORE WE ASK THE QUESTIONS, PLEASE TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF:

Age:

- 16-30
- 21-45
- 46-60
- 60+
- Rather not answer

Sex:

- Female
- Male
- Rather not answer

How many years have you been a Lutheran?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- 30+
- Rather not answer

If you were Christian before you became a Lutheran Christian, what were you?

- Roman Catholic
- Pentecostal
- Protestant
- Other
- Rather Not Answer

Questionnaire About the work of the Holy Spirit

Group I True/False

1. The gifts of the Holy Spirit such as tongues, divine healing, and prophecy are active today. (True/False).
2. The charismatic movement is causing divisions within many congregations of EECMY. (True/False).
3. There is no problem with the charismatic movement when it claims direct spiritual illuminations apart from the Bible. (True/False).
4. God promised to reveal His will to us at times directly and immediately apart from the Scriptures. (True/False).
5. There are objective promises of the Gospel which we depend on rather than on one's feelings or emotions. (True/False).
6. When one becomes a child of God through Baptism, the Lord gives him or her the Holy Spirit as a gift. (True/False).
7. Gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to all baptized Christians. (True/False).
8. Seeing gifts of Holy Spirit as only for a select few leads to pride and confusion in the church. (True/False).
9. You have the gift of Holy Spirit of speaking in tongues. (Yes/No).

Group II

10. The Holy Spirit gave the gifts of speaking in tongues to the church in a apostolic times.
1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5, Totally agree
11. The Holy Spirit gives the gift of speaking in tongues to the church today.
1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5, Totally agree
12. There are two kinds of baptism- Baptism with water and Baptism with the Holy Spirit.
1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5, Totally agree
13. Baptism with water is necessary for a Christian today.

1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5, Totally agree

14. Baptism with the Holy Spirit is necessary for a Christian today.

1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5, Totally agree

15. The church's ministry is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world.

1. Totally Disagree 2. Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4. Somewhat agree 5. Totally agree

16. The Holy Spirit gives the gift of speaking in tongues to the church to empower her for ministry.

1. Totally Disagree 2. Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4. Somewhat agree 5. Totally agree

17. The Charismatic movement is consistent with Bible teaching.

1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5, Totally agree

18. The Charismatic movement is consistent with Lutheran Theology.

1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5, Totally agree

19. The Charismatic movement is contrary to the reformation principles of grace alone, faith alone, and Scripture alone.

1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5, Totally agree

20. Speaking in tongues is authentically a true Christian experience.

1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5, Totally agree

21. There is great need of the work of Holy Spirit in the church today.

1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5, Totally agree

22. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are not a means of grace.

1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5, Totally agree

23. Special signs and wonders are guarantees that the Spirit of God dwells within an individual.

- 1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5,
Totally agree
24. Faith in Christ does not eliminates illness from the life of a Christian.
1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5,
Totally agree
25. The gifts of the Holy Spirit include one's natural gifts and talents.
1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5,
Totally agree
26. The charismatic movement in EECMY is helpful for church growth.
1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5,
Totally agree
27. EECMY has a rich heritage of Spirit theology in its Confession.
1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5,
Totally agree
28. The charismatic movement is not essential for Evangelistic outreach work in the church.
1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5,
Totally agree
29. Tongue speaking is an essential mark of a true Christian.
1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5,
Totally agree
30. The gift of healing is one of God's ways of confirming the truth of proclamation of the
Gospel.
1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5,
Totally agree
31. There are prophecies in the church today apart from the Scripture itself.
1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5,
Totally agree
32. We do not need prayers to get the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5,
Totally agree
33. The gift of the Holy Spirit is given to all believers only by the grace of God, not because
of any effort on the part of the recipient.

1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5,
Totally agree

34. Seeing the gifts of the Holy Spirit as only for a select few leads to pride and confusion in the church.

1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5,
Totally agree

35. Speaking in tongues causes divisions among members of the Church.

1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5,
Totally agree

36. The Holy Spirit produces the fellowship of believers in the Body of Christ which produces unity.

1, Totally Disagree 2, Somewhat Disagree 3, No opinion 4, Somewhat agree 5,
Totally agree

Thank you very much for helping me by answering these questions. May Jesus and His Holy Spirit continue to bless you!

APPENDIX TWO

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

Introduction

First of all, it was nearly twenty years ago while serving as a field missionary (Botswana & South Africa) that I began to reflect upon how Christology, and the five “word-gifts” of the ascended Lord, informs and forms “the ministry of the Church” thereby granting a Christological balance to our missiological and ecclesiastical labors.

Second, God’s people, if they are to be equipped for their work of ministry, and to become mature disciples, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ, must receive the counsel and embrace the practices of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Eph. 4:11–16). Anything less than this “whole counsel of God” diminishes and reduces the Gospel from having free course for the evangelization of the nations and the edification of the Church.

The primary purpose of this short paper is to understand how these five “wordgifts,” expressed through their respective counsel and practices, inform and form our ministry endeavors. In order to accomplish this, the paper will explore these core convictions:

A. Christ is the Head of the Church and, when He ascended, He gave five “wordgifts”¹ to His people (the “word-gifts” essential for the Christological balance) so that they might become mature, built up in the Christian faith, and equipped for their work of ministry within the body of Christ, and in their mission to the nations, as His evangelizing, edifying and missionary priests

and people

B. What happens when immaturity within the body of Christ, and not being able to attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (by an inability to acquire and/or keep the Christological balance) redefines, limits and hinders His mission and ministries through various forms of reductionist thinking and practices

C. The Church is always in need of receiving the correcting, reforming, and revitalizing words of Jesus so that they can, in every age and context, be a mature, fully informed, formed, and equipped body of Christ as an apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching church

Christ Himself manifested these same five “word-gifts” during His earthly ministry for He was an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor-shepherd and teacher. The very gifts that Jesus gives His people to bless humankind in our time were the very gifts He used to bless people in His time.

The Five Gifts-Offices from Our Ascended Lord

There is not sufficient space in this article to present a comprehensive examination of their counsel and practices for “the ministry of the Church” but only a partial and cursory introduction into their wisdom for our evangelizing, edifying and missionary endeavors:

A. The prophetic office has blessed humankind, and God’s people, with these essential gifts:

1. the root narratives regarding the origin of the universe, why it was created and for what purpose

2. the root narratives regarding the origin of humankind and God’s design for the coram relationships; that is, how each human being is to live coram Deo, coram meipso, coram

hominibus, coram mundo – it is God’s “blueprint” for humankind’s being and existence

3. the stories, narratives and wisdom literature that help us understand “the human condition” and “God’s response to that human condition” – the sacred scriptures “gift” us with two kinds of wisdom so that we can make sense of our story in light of His story and His promises of salvation in Jesus Christ:

a. soteriological wisdom...to make us wise unto salvation which is by grace, through faith, in Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 3:15)

b. hermeneutical wisdom...to help us make sense of life’s story in light of His story/stories (Matthew 13:11, 16–17, 51–52; 2 Tim. 3:16–17)

4. to help God’s people remember “who God is” and “what He has done” for the salvation of us and all people -- and to remember “who they are” and “why they are in the world”

5. to warn of idolatry and evil ways of living -- convicting national, congregational and individual sins – and communicating a living hope in the Promised Messiah It is never an easy task to “systematize” the teachings of Scripture and I am sure that others could say that this specific “counsel and practice” should be placed under one of the other categories – and that person could be correct in their judgment. What I am saying is this: this is my best thinking and that I could be incorrect in my categorization of these Biblical truths; however, regardless of where they are placed, they still are derived from Scripture and they are to norm our theology and practice.

6. a prophet is one who has been given the words of God so that God might reveal His counsel; often the topics dealt with impending judgment upon Israel’s infidelity or a nation’s sin and to declare the will, purpose and judgment of God -- the recital of God’s judging and saving actions for the sake of His people and as a witness to the nations with the hope that they, too,

might embrace His promises of salvation

7. along with the apostolic office, to provide the foundation upon which the Church is built (Eph. 2:19–22), as the source and norm of all theology and practice . . . and to answer the “big questions” that every human being has in life³

B. The apostolic office has blessed humankind, and God’s people, with these essential gifts:

1. how the Messianic prophecies connected with God’s promised remedy for our sinful human condition were fulfilled in the life and work of Jesus Christ – He is, indeed, “the Right Man” (Martin Luther)

2. laying the foundation,⁴ along with the prophets, upon which the Church is built, with Christ being the Cornerstone; along with instilling and teaching the apostolic faith and tradition

3. sent to establish churches as they evangelized, edified the saints, and appointed pastors to oversee “the ministry of the Church” in those places (Acts 14:21–23)

4. stewards of the mysteries of the Gospel – many of these “mysteries” were explained by Jesus in His teaching on the parables of the Kingdom so that they could be “wise scribes”

5. examines and discerns the condition of the “lampstand”—and writes missionary letters to guide, admonish and counsel the saints in their coram relationships

6. Who is God and what is God like; how does God feel toward me and the rest of humankind; how did this world come into existence and for what purpose was it created; who am I and why am I here; what will happen to me when I die; what kind of “righteousness” is required on the day of judgment and how is this “justifying faith” made known and acquired; what is true and what is false; what is right and what is wrong; etc. ⁴ There is only one foundation upon which a person can build one’s life now and for eternity and that one foundation

is Jesus Christ; “apostolic counsel and practices” are concerned about what kind of foundation will be built upon (Matt. 7:24–27) and what kind of building will be constructed in a person’s life (1 Cor. 3:10b–15).

7. to equip and send workers into the harvest fields—appointing overseers, elders and deacons so that His people might prosper the Master’s business

8. to advocate a missionary posture by God’s priests and people as they interact with the nations so that they might become all things to all people and bring some to a saving knowledge of God’s grace in the person of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 9:19–23)

9. to foster and engage in the formation of indigenous churches, led by indigenous leadership

C. The evangelistic office has blessed humankind, and God’s people, with these essential gifts:

1. to proclaim and herald the Good News to people who believe in, and have embraced, non-Christian narratives and false ways of salvation with the hope that they will make sense of their story in light of His story and promises of salvation

2. to equip God’s people to be able to understand and interpret the life of another person in light of His story, the sacred Scriptures (with its Law and Gospel), especially the saving story of the Gospel and the Word become flesh (John 1:14–18, 29; 3:1–18; Rom. 3:10–28; Eph. 2:8–10; 1 John 5:11–12)

D. The pastoral office has blessed humankind, and God’s people, with these essential gifts:

1. feeding God’s people with His Word and Sacraments and caring for their souls as one who has to give an account

2. doing the work of an evangelist – being an example to the flock – able to guard, keep

and teach the apostolic faith

3. forming and equipping God's people to be able to test the spirits because not every spirit comes from God, for many false apostles and prophets have gone out into the world

4. guiding, exhorting and equipping God's people to be faithful and fruitful stewards of the Gospel, and of His many physical blessings, so that they might be a blessing to the nations through their Gospel proclamation and their deeds of love and compassion within the body of Christ and in the world

5. cultivating a Biblical spirituality⁵ in God's people, a spirituality that consists of prayer (oratio); meditation upon God's Word (meditatio); and trials, struggles and temptations (tentatio)

E. The teaching office has blessed humankind, and God's people, with these essential gifts:

1. to inform, form, and equip disciples of Jesus Christ so that they might be conformed to the image of His Son -- who are also His servants, witnesses, priests, stewards, salt, light, ambassadors, temples of the Holy Spirit, living letters, etc.

2. to communicate His Word, and model His way of life, so that it informs and forms the believer's entire existence through the daily socialization of the Christian faith as it is both taught and modeled in Christian homes and in the ministries of the Church

3. to defend the faith and equip the saints to always be able to give the reason for the hope that lives within them, yet with gentleness and respect

4. to teach all that Jesus has commanded -- taught of the Spirit who are able to teach others

The ascended Lord has greatly blessed His people through the counsel and practices of these five gifts made known through the apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching offices of the Church. It is His intention that the counsel and practices connected with these

“word-gifts” be incorporated, and integrated, into the life and ministries of His people, as His body, so that they might become a mature and fully equipped people of God for “the ministry of the Church” – this ministry being accomplished through their individual and corporate labors as His evangelizing, edifying and missionary priests and people.

5 The human condition is filled with tribulations, trials, and temptations (*tentatio*); and these drive us to prayer (*oratio*), asking God for His help, counsel, and strength; and these also drive us to His Word (*meditatio*) for counsel, wisdom and consolation. This kind of spiritual formation and Biblical spirituality comforts and guides us in our baptized life; but it also is intended to equip us to be messengers of His Holy Spirit as He brings us alongside others, among Christians and non-Christians, who are also experiencing their own trials, struggles, and temptations. As His priests, we turn to God in prayer on their behalf but also seek to bring a comforting and consoling word based upon our meditation of God’s Word so that they may be helped and blessed in the midst of their trials, struggles, and temptations.

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