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THE CONTEMPORARY CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT  
AND THE REACTION OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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A Research Paper Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for elective  
P-199

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by

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## CHAPTER I

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

For all of this century the Pentecostal churches have been claiming the experience of Spirit-Baptism, separate and different from Baptism with water, which gives them special gifts of the Holy Spirit: glossolalia, gifts of healing, prophecy and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit, as outlined in I Corinthians 12:8-11 and in other places in Scripture. Throughout this time the other churches, the so-called "main line" churches, have taken a dim view of their brothers in the Pentecostal churches who were apparently sociologically, psychologically, educationally, and economically deprived and thus needed this subjective and emotional religious experience.

Beginning with the time around 1960 something else began happening: Pentecostal-types were appearing in the "main line" churches. It was alleged that Spirit-Baptism and the gifts of the Holy Spirit were being poured out upon Episcopalians and Lutherans. The movement was confined neither liturgically, nor socially, nor geographically. At the present time there are large numbers of what are called neo-Pentecostals in the Lutheran, Episcopal, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches. In many cases, in this movement of Pentecostalism into the "main line" churches, there has been some connection between the older Pentecostals and the neo-Pentecostals. Often there has not been this connection, but the movement spreads among the neo-Pentecostals already in

the established churches. Generally, there is a seeking for something more, for a surer grip on Christianity, a deeper love of God and one's fellow man, more zeal in witnessing. For those who are seeking these things the baptism in the Holy Spirit has been a very transforming experience.

Something else takes place. Often, where there has been this experience among some of the members of a church and not among the others, there develops a misunderstanding and a divisiveness. Such is the subject of this paper. Why is there this divisiveness? Is it really true that Spirit-baptism is a separate experience, apart from baptism with water? Does God intend for people today to have this gift of Spirit-baptism? How does the church react when there is this divisiveness? How does the local congregation react? Are there any differences among the various Lutheran groups in the United States in the manner in which this situation is dealt with?

These are the questions with which we will deal in this paper. There appears to have been no research papers written on this subject at Concordia Seminary. A recent STM thesis entitled Tongues and Prophecy--A Comparative Study in Charismata did not touch closely upon the contemporary charismatic movement.<sup>1</sup>

Since the contemporary nature of the subject matter precludes the use of many books, research material has been obtained in the following ways: A major source of information came through correspondence with individuals involved in the charismatic movement in different places and with officials in the different Lutheran groups in the United States. Another important source of information was articles appearing in theo-

logical journals of recent date and in the official publications of various church bodies. Some information came through books and through newspaper articles and news magazine articles. Also, personal interviews with individuals who are now involved in the charismatic movement supplied some information. The personal letters and personal interviews do not necessarily represent a random sampling, but the selection was done on the basis of available names and addresses.

On the basis of the material obtained the writer will attempt the following: to give a brief historical overview of the situation; to take a closer look at just what the contemporary charismatic movement is; to present some possible explanations to the question: Why this outpouring of the Spirit now?; to look at some of the scientific studies that have been conducted on charismatic phenomena; to analyze some of the exegetical treatments of pertinent New Testament passages; to look at the divineness factor; and, finally, we will compare the reactions of the different Lutheran bodies in the United States, with special emphasis on the reaction in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

An objective treatment of a subject that can be very non-objective is what is aimed at. In a way, that is like trying to put new wine into old wine bottles. It is trying to take something that is of the Spirit, something of faith, and put it into the words of man, put it on paper, and try to communicate. This is not always possible, but it is usually necessary to try.

This author has not received Spirit-baptism or any of the accompanying special gifts of the Holy Spirit. That could be considered a boast and it could be considered a confession. At any rate, the charis-

matic movement is upon us. There is no denying it and it will not go away if we try to ignore it. That is why it is necessary to read about it. That is why it is necessary to write about it. That is why this paper is being written.



## CHAPTER II

### AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION

It is not the purpose of this paper to present an in-depth study of the history of Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement. We will begin with the Apostolic Age and move rather quickly to the present time.

Even the casual student of the situation knows of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2, and on the Gentile converts, recorded in Acts 10:44-48. He knows of the situation in Corinth, dealt with by Paul in I Corinthians 12-14, where the exercise of certain gifts of the Holy Spirit presented some problems. Apparently, however, the Church of the New Testament did not long possess these special gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Harris Kaasa, Professor of Religion at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, writes that Irenaeus reported some instances of the charismatic phenomenon of speaking in tongues in the second century and that the phenomenon was attacked by the philosopher Celsus in the third century. However, by the time of Chrysostom in the fourth century these gifts seem to have died out. There are reports of several instances in the Middle Ages, and the existence of glossolalia among early Quakers and Methodists is disputed. Kaasa goes on to say,

In summary, we may say that there is considerable evidence for the recurrence of the phenomenon. At the same time, no one can fail to be struck by its relative infrequency and by the fact that it occurs mostly among members of radical sects. Its exceptional presence should not blind us to its general absence in the mainstream of church history.<sup>2</sup>

The pattern was interrupted at the beginning of this century.

Heinrich Vogel, professor at the Mequon Seminary of the Wisconsin Synod,

tells us that Pentecostalism as a separate church group, claiming the experience of Spirit-Baptism as a distinguishing feature, originated in 1901 and has grown and spread rapidly so that today it claims 12,000,000 adherents in 90 countries of the world. It is an outgrowth of the Holiness Movement of the late nineteenth century. Vogel continues,

The origin of Pentecostalism is traced to Charles Fox Parham, who had opened a school in Topeka, Kansas, in October, 1900. On New Year's Eve of that year he laid hands on Miss Agnes Ozman so that she might receive the Holy Spirit. She immediately began to speak in tongues, speaking no English but only Chinese for three days.

This was the beginning and the Pentecostal movement has not been held back until the membership figures reached the number cited above.

The material in the previous paragraph, however, applies only to Pentecostals, understood by the narrower definition of that term, Church of God, Assemblies of God, and others. The charismatic movement entered into the "main line" churches as reported by Professor Donald W. Burdick, Professor of New Testament at Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary, Denver, Colorado,

For the most part the Pentecostal viewpoint was confined to Pentecostal churches until the late 1950's and the early 1960's . . . . It began to be apparent that more and more people in the traditional churches were speaking in tongues. The event which focused national attention on this new invasion occurred on April 3, 1960, at the 2,600 member St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California. Father Dennis Bennett, the rector of this influential church, received the gift of tongues and upon announcing the fact was forced to resign.

This might be called the beginning of the modern charismatic movement. For three paragraphs we will follow the movement by citing the intermittent reports contained in Time magazine. Time, in reporting the above incident, stated that glossolalia, which lasted only until the third century in the early church, now seemed to be on the way back in

United States churches, "not only in the uninhibited Pentecostal sects but even among Episcopalians, who have been called 'God's frozen people'." The report goes on to say that Bennett had been bringing the practice of glossolalia into his own parish for some time. Some of the members became interested. However, the vestry asked for his resignation and the bishop sent out a pastoral letter banning any more speaking in tongues in church auspices. Father Bennett was transferred to a new parish in Seattle.<sup>5</sup>

Two and one half years later there appeared another article in Time on the same subject. The report states that although glossolalia had been tried out in the preceding years by a number of Episcopalian and Lutheran churches in the Far and Middle West, now they were trying it at Yale, a skeptical university in the East. The participants were members of the conservative Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. Rev. William Sloane Coffin, Jr., Chaplain at the university, says regarding the practice of the "gift" that it is a genuine religious experience and a natural way for students to gain emotional release from the tensions of college life.<sup>6</sup>

Again in Time, now in May, 1963, we read of the letter of Bishop Pike of California in which he denounced the excesses of glossolalia. He directed the clergy not to propagate glossolalia and cautioned laymen to avoid its practice.<sup>7</sup> One year later we read in Time of the dismissal of Rev. A. Herbert Mjorud from the evangelism staff of The American Lutheran Church for his promotion of glossolalia.<sup>8</sup> These, however, are the only reports in Time which were reflected in the Reader's Guide.

Of course, the church press has been more thorough in its treatment

of the charismatic movement. In general, however, the church press did little more than report of isolated incidents and give occasional cautious admonitions about the excesses of glossolalia and the related phenomena. Few have dealt with the movement as incisively as did the theological journal Dialog in a 1963 editorial introducing "A Symposium on Speaking in Tongues":

We are rather sure we know whether it be of men or God; we are very sure this is no gift to be sought and used in the church; it is a virtual denial of incarnational theology. It is of one piece with the old "circumcision" thinking which unites legalism and spiritualism in every age.<sup>9</sup>

The Episcopalian periodical The Living Church was not as negative toward the movement as it informs the reader about what is happening in the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago and says,

In recent months some devout and dedicated members of the Episcopal Church in this diocese have felt within their lives and within varying groups living the full discipline of the church's fellowship the touch of a spiritual inspiration strikingly different in character from the usual ordinary experiences of the majority of the faithful. This has manifested itself in a kind of "spiritual speaking".<sup>10</sup>

Without denying the experience and without forbidding the practice of glossolalia, the article goes on to cite the dangers of separatism, irrationality, and fascination with the bizarre. The author points out the obligations of the pastors to protect the faithful from any possible incursions of irrational and pathological forces which would prey on their faith. Certain precautions are urged to be exercised, in regard to the phenomena, but there is no denial of anyone's right to practice it.<sup>11</sup>

A more negative view is adopted by Methodist Bishop Everett Palmer who writes in the Christian Advocate in October, 1964. He speaks well of

the gifts of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, and peace, however, he says:

"The Methodist Church . . . does not give support to a side effect on occasion associated with the gift of the Holy Spirit known as 'speaking in tongues'."<sup>12</sup>

The Roman Catholic periodical America reports in June, 1968, of the periodic appearance of the charism called "glossolaly" in those heated religious movements of enthusiasm that are generally described as Pentecostal. The report goes on to state that the United Presbyterian Church had just authorized a study of this phenomenon,

motivated by an honest desire that contemporary Christianity, absorbed in sociological problems, should not neglect strictly spiritual issues; and by concern at the attractions of young people to experiences of the LSD variety.<sup>13</sup>

In general, however, the church press, to this point in time, has not devoted much space to the charismatic movement and associated charismatic phenomena. To The Lutheran, official publication of The Lutheran Church in America, there is no index, making it very difficult to research this periodical. The Lutheran Witness, official publication of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, has contained some articles during the course of the past seven years, but not to the extent that coverage in the Lutheran Standard, official publication of The American Lutheran Church, has been.

Articles and short news comments in the Lutheran Standard began appearing in May, 1961, where we read of a Lutheran pastor in Washington, D. C. who has been holding healing services in his church. The pastor stated that he took Jesus' words seriously when He said: "Heal the sick!" In editorial fashion, the magazine gives a listing of books which the

the reader might want to get because of "the increasing interest in spiritual healing and related subjects."<sup>14</sup>

In the short span of one year, 1962, probably the year in which there was the most activity on the charismatic level in The American Lutheran Church, there appeared a number of articles and short news items in the Lutheran Standard on the charismatic movement. They include: a news item on a report of the ULCA, after a two-year long study of "faith healing", warning members about "faith healers";<sup>15</sup> a question asked by a reader: "What does speaking in tongues mean?" and a brief reply;<sup>16</sup> two articles in the same issue on the contemporary practice of spiritual healing, both of which gave a positive assessment;<sup>17, 18</sup> a report that the ALC had formed a special committee to study the "manifestations of the Holy Spirit's power" which have been called to the attention of the church;<sup>19</sup> and an article entitled "Speaking in Tongues" in which the author reports of a number of favorable letters in which the writers cite their experiences of speaking in tongues. In conclusion, the author of the article says,

Whatever disposition of the matter is made in the councils of the church, the climate of the church appears to be cautious, but not hostile, toward the phenomenon of spiritual speaking and other charismatic gifts of faith in the New Testament.<sup>20</sup>

The high incidence of articles in the Lutheran Standard on aspects of the charismatic movement continued in 1963. In this volume more of the articles deal with incidents outside of the Lutheran Church. Here they are: the account of the Yale students who are speaking in tongues;<sup>21</sup> Bishop Pike's warning letter in which he says that speaking in tongues in his denomination was reaching a point where it was dangerous to peace and

unity in the church;<sup>22</sup> a denial by the president of the Rocky Mountain District of the ALC that all but one of the ALC pastors in Montana had received the gift of speaking in tongues;<sup>23</sup> a report that a Minneapolis congregation had been dropped from the rolls of the Evangelical Free Church of America because its pastor and some of its members were engaging in "speaking in tongues and other Pentecostal phenomena";<sup>24</sup> and, finally, the report that the ALC Church Council had approved the study of glossolalia prepared by a committee after a two-year study. The report neither condemned nor encouraged speaking in tongues but was, so the report goes, as evangelical as Paul's treatment of the subject in I Corinthians 12-14.<sup>25</sup>

1964, too, was a good year for reports on the charismatic movement in the Lutheran Standard. Here they are: a news item on the dim view that a theologian, speaking to the Texas Association of Christian Churches, gave to the practice of speaking in tongues;<sup>26</sup> an editorial report on the meeting of the Church Council of the ALC which voted not to renew the call of evangelist Herbert Mjorud because of his practice and promotion of speaking in tongues;<sup>27</sup> an editorial report on the open-ended policy statement of the Church Council of the ALC on glossolalia;<sup>28</sup> a report that the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement recognizes glossolalia as a possible gift of the Holy Spirit, but is not propogating or Mothering the movement;<sup>29</sup> a quotation of a very negative statement that Rev. W. T. Eggers of the Missouri Synod made about speaking in tongues: "of what use is it to the church?";<sup>30</sup> and a report on the opening of the first Christian Healing Hospital, a 102 bed hospital in Medford, Oregon, to be staffed by committed Christians who will employ the "power of prayer and the

Holy Spirit."<sup>31</sup>

The presses of the Lutheran Standard were relatively quiet for about four years until 1968 when we read of Way of the Cross Lutheran Church in Coon Rapids, Minnesota, that it had decided to refinance the \$150,000 mortgage on its new church rather than remove its pastor. Difficulty in paying off the debt had arisen when membership had fallen off because the pastor began speaking in tongues.<sup>32</sup> Also in 1968 there was a news item on a statement made by the head of the Assemblies of God churches who complained that there was too much time spent in analyzing speaking in tongues: "It is not possible to be baptized in the Holy Spirit without speaking in tongues," he said.<sup>33</sup>

In general it must be said that Lutheran Standard gave an objective report on items relative to the charismatic movement. Many of them were only brief news items. Not a few were longer, article-length, items. None of them were essentially negative toward the charismatic movement. This latter statement also applies to articles which appeared in the Lutheran Witness, official publication of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

The first was a two-page article entitled "Speaking in Tongues", written by Professor Ralph Bohlmann of the systematics department of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. The author cites increasing reports of those, especially among the "main line" churches, who are practicing the gift of speaking in tongues and gives a brief overview of the subject matter. What does Scripture make of it? What are some of the harmful effects? What use should be made of it? The author adopts a quite cautious, but far from condemnatory, attitude toward speaking in



tongues. He concludes by giving some guiding principles to be observed as the reader is continued to be confronted with reports of glossolalia among his fellow Christians.<sup>34</sup>

That article prompted one reader of the Lutheran Witness to write the following letter:

"Speaking in Tongues" in the May 14 issue seemed to sound a warning note which we in the Lutheran tradition don't need to hear. It is easy to point to the dangers and excesses of other groups and fail to see what they have that we lack.

.....

Our relationship to God presumably should involve the total and free giving of ourselves, and that means also all of our emotions in whatever intensity we happen to have them. Or are we so tame in our religious feelings that religious ecstasy should be unknown to us Lutherans. Or is there any reason for limiting it only to the singing of chorales?<sup>35</sup>

In February, 1964, the Lutheran Witness carried the news item that the ALC had finished its two-year study of glossolalia and approved the report of the committee. The report neither condemned nor encouraged the practice, according to President Schiotez of The American Lutheran Church, but points out that "there is a danger of overemphasis on glossolalia on the part of some with an unbalanced, distorted Christian perspective as the outcome."<sup>36</sup>

After this the indexes to the Lutheran Witness indicate that nothing on the subject of the charismatic movement was carried until 1968 when a question was sent in by a reader: "Did the Pentecost miracles continue?" The answer that was given was that these miracles were directed to a specific purpose, "to carry the Gospel of the risen Christ to the world," and "thus the signs were apparently of a temporary nature." The Lutheran Witness goes on to say that the Pentecost phenomena were of a separate

category from the speaking in tongues mentioned by Paul in I Corinthians 14 which was more like unintelligible speaking.<sup>37</sup>

This did not go unnoticed by one reader who wrote to the Lutheran Witness regarding the answer to the question: "Did the Pentecost miracles continue?" The writer of the letter complains that the statement, "Thus the signs were apparently of a temporary nature," was made without any convincing reasons for it. The writer goes on to say, now writing about Jesus' commission to heal, that God's promises are not dependent upon man's performance to verify their validity,

The commissions to heal were given to the Twelve in Matt. 10:8; to the Seventy in Luke 10:9; to all who believe in Mark 16:17-18; and to the Church in James 5:14-16. These commissions have never been withdrawn, and our failure to act on them does not render them unnecessary or unworkable today.<sup>38</sup>

The August, 1968, issue of the Lutheran Witness carried a book review of Speaking in Tongues and its Significance for the Church, a book by Rev. Laurence Christenson, a pastor in The American Lutheran Church and a leader in the charismatic movement. In the review, Professor Andrew Schulze of Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana, spoke well of the book: "Basically, Speaking in Tongues takes the New Testament perspective;" "the book is quite popular in tone;" and "the book can help pastors and other theologically trained persons . . . ." In conclusion, Schulze says that the subject of Spirit-baptism and speaking in tongues "is bound to engage the attention of the entire church in the near future."<sup>39</sup>

As compared to Lutheran Standard, reports in the Lutheran Witness on the charismatic movement have not been plentiful. The most lengthy was Bohlmann's in 1963. That one prompted some reader reaction. Since then there have only been scattered reports of a general nature. The indexed

volumes of Lutheran Witness do not go back before 1960, but it is safe to assume that there were few, if any, reports on the charismatic movement before this time.

Having treated the charismatic movement historically, based for the most part on periodical articles, we are now ready to take a closer look at the contemporary charismatic movement.

## CHAPTER III

### A CLOSER LOOK AT THE CONTEMPORARY CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

In this chapter we will direct our attention to a number of features of the contemporary charismatic movement. What is it? What is Spirit-baptism? What about this speaking in tongues? What is a prayer meeting of the charismatics like? What about their relation to the sacraments? What relation do they desire with the established church? How extensive is the movement among Lutherans?

Here we are concerned with the contemporary charismatic movement and are thus dealing with those who have been called neo-Pentecostals. It is difficult to deal statistically with them, because, according to Luther P. Gerlach and Virginia Heine, members of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Minnesota, they consist of,

enclaves of "Spirit-filled" Christians, who remain active in their non-Pentecostal churches, but meet regularly in homes, in churches of sympathetic or participating clergymen, or on campuses of those colleges and universities where there has been an "outpouring of the Spirit."<sup>40</sup>

For most people, as for this writer, there is difficulty in understanding the charismatic movement, because, as was told to this author by Rodney Lensch, former pastor in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod who had to leave because of his baptism in the Holy Spirit and practice of the associated gifts of the Spirit: "One cannot interpret the charismatic movement by reading of it or by hearing of it, but only by experience with it."<sup>41</sup>

The charismatic movement, as seen by Lensch, is the movement of the Holy Spirit to create one Church.<sup>42</sup> As He moves He bestows His gifts,

but His first gift to those who share in this movement is the experience of Spirit-baptism. According to Dr. Howard W. Tepker, Professor of Systematic Theology at Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, this expression, "baptism with the Holy Spirit" occurs in the New Testament (Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5 and Acts 11:16), but the process is never described. However, other parts of Scripture seem to describe the concept in different words: in Acts 6:3, 5, and 8 the seven deacons are described as being "full of the Spirit;" Also, Stephen (Acts 7:55) and Paul (Acts 9:17) are said to be full of the Spirit. In Acts 10:44-46 two other expressions are used which could denote the same concept: "The Holy Spirit fell on those who heard the Word," and "The gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out . . . on the Gentiles."<sup>43</sup>

Rev. Laurence Christenson, a leader in the charismatic movement, describes how he sees what the New Testament is saying about Spirit-baptism. He asks,

(What is the pattern for the baptism with the Holy Spirit, as we find it in the Scriptures? It is this: the Word of Salvation in Christ is proclaimed; the hearer receives the Word, believes, and is baptized with water; the believer is baptized with the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the baptism with the Holy Spirit occurs spontaneously, sometimes through prayer and the laying on of hands. Sometimes it occurs after water baptism, sometimes before. Sometimes it occurs virtually simultaneously with conversion, sometimes after an interval of time. So there is considerable variety within the pattern of Scripture. But one thing is constant in Scripture, and it is important: It is never merely assumed that a person has been baptized with the Holy Spirit. When he has been baptized with the Spirit the person knows it. It is a definite experience.<sup>44</sup>)

Much of the time Spirit-baptism is accompanied with glossolalia. When there is the speaking in tongues this is usually considered a certification of a person's having received Spirit-baptism. Lutheran Pastor James H. Hanson relates some of his feelings on his experiences with

## glossolalia:

Glossolalia is a means of communication between man and God. It is a given language. Following a prayer for the fullness of the Spirit, often with the laying on of hands of a person who has had the experience, the individual is prompted to give free expression to his spirit in sounds other than the vernacular. At a given point in the experience the speaker finds his tongue being taken over and a new language being formed by a power other than his own. It is a language of prayer and praise to God, for one discovers his mind being filled with the rich and wonderful thoughts of God that come through his Spirit.

This experience is not irrational. At no time does the participant become unaware of his creaturiness. His senses continue to operate. But for a span of time his spirit is given free access to God without the impediment of having to choose with his mind words to express his thoughts and petitions.<sup>45</sup> These expressions are given apart from the process of thought.

Father Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B., Director of the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research, Collegeville, Minnesota, and a prominent Roman Catholic authority on the charismatic movement, uses the following terms to describe a Roman Catholic Pentecostal meeting in which there was glossolalia, not necessarily connected with a person's original Spirit-baptism, and certainly not the most important part of the meeting: "about fifteen members;" "deep personal relationships have obviously developed;" "a true concern . . . for spiritual welfare;" "friendly, relaxed atmosphere;" "people prayed and meditated silently;" "a man asked the prayers of the group for a domestic problem" and the others put their hands on his head and shoulders as he knelt in the middle of the room; "During this time one of the members spoke in tongues which lasted about a half minute or less;" "guitar singing;" "talk and prayers about problems;" "some of them sang in tongues;" and "the meeting lasted about two and one half hours, very modest by classical and neo-Pentecostal standards."<sup>46</sup>

Speaking in tongues is an important part of Spirit-baptism and, while not necessarily essential, it is important in the whole charismatic movement. Rev. Christenson writes about the connection between Spirit-baptism and glossolalia in the book of Acts,

In the book of Acts, it is the experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit which provides the key to understanding the purpose and function of speaking in tongues, because all references to speaking in tongues occur in connection with it. In other words, it is as an aspect of this experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit that speaking in tongues derives its significance in the book of Acts.<sup>47</sup>

Earlier in his book, Christenson had written of speaking in tongues as "speaking in a language--a language which expresses the deep feelings and thoughts of the speaker, a language which God hears and understands."<sup>48</sup>

It offers the following blessing:

Enhancement of one's private worship is the essential blessing of speaking in tongues. The other blessing is summed up in it: As you worship God in tongues, your mind is at rest and your spirit prays, unhindered by the limitations of the human understanding, and through this act of worship the Holy Spirit builds up your life in Christ.<sup>49</sup>

Thor Hall, Norwegian-born Assistant Professor of Preaching and Theology at the Divinity School at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, writing about the phenomenon of glossolalia, substantiates the words of Christenson in which he says that through speaking in tongues the Holy Spirit is able to build up one's life in Christ. Hall asks the question of how the Gospel can be translated into the contemporary idiom. Being truly contemporary in terminology, he says, is difficult to achieve. Regarding preaching, even with all the variations we can find or invent, our style is still bound within certain predetermined syntactical limits, based on the traditional linguistics of the world.<sup>50</sup> He mentions some of the new ways of expressing religion, among them modern

music, off-beat poetry, and also glossolalia. Here, he says, there is freedom for the Holy Spirit and to those who would shut off this kind of an experience of religion, Hall says,

St. Paul's emphasis on the orderliness of Christian worship is wise, but it has often been misappropriated by those who will claim the right of order against the freedom of the Spirit.<sup>51</sup>

However, it is because of this close connection of speaking in tongues to the whole charismatic movement that the popular misconception is that charismatics are a group of half-crazy who get together to speak in tongues and practice faith healing and the other gifts of the Spirit. This is not quite true, says Father McDonnell, but rather,

(If Pentecostalism is to be identified with any one thing it must be with the fullness of life in the Spirit, including all the gifts and charisms of the Spirit, of which tongues is one. Even though most American Pentecostals speak of tongues as evidence that the baptism in the Holy Spirit has taken place, even the most intransigent leaders insist that the central issue is not tongues.<sup>52</sup>)

He expresses similar thoughts in an article which appeared in Dialog recently,

Catholic and Protestant neo-Pentecostals do not come together specifically to pray in tongues. They are disturbed by neither the presence nor absence of tongues in a given prayer meeting. The issue in Pentecostalism is not tongues, but fullness of life in the Holy Spirit, openness to the power of the Spirit, and the exercise of all the gifts of the Spirit.<sup>53</sup>

"The exercise of all the gifts of the Spirit"--when they are exercised, they make a confession, according to the words of Arnold Bittlinger, author of Gifts and Graces and the holder of a responsible position in the Evangelical Church in Germany,

Spiritual gifts can only be exercised in the right way when they are an expression of a life-union with Jesus. This personal relationship to Jesus, which takes on form in the confession "Jesus is Lord," can only be brought about by the Holy Spirit.<sup>54</sup>



He further states that,

To each one gifts are given. The possession of Spiritual gifts is . . . in no sense a measure of Christian maturity. Spiritual gifts are received as presents from God by every Christian who will accept them in childlike faith.<sup>55</sup>

The charismatic movement is concerned with the pouring out of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues is one of His gifts. It is one of the identifying features of the movement, but not the most important, according to the words of Michael Harper, an Anglican clergyman closely associated with the movement in Great Britain,

Perhaps it is true to say that love is one of the main marks of this movement--rather than speaking in tongues which captures most of the publicity. Christians are receiving a deeper love for God and His Son--a richer love for other Christians which is bringing together men and women of very different traditions--and a broader love for all men and desire for their good. If this is so, then it deserves both success and sympathetic treatment.<sup>56</sup>

Pastor Jerome Schoel lists some of the other gifts of the Spirit, most notable among them being gifts associated with the power of the Holy Spirit,

have you ever wondered why the church seems so powerless against the forces of evil today? Have you ever wondered why we don't experience the miracles of the Scriptures today? You know Jesus said in John 14:12, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do because I go to the Father." Notice he didn't say the apostles or first century disciples, but he who believes in me will do the works of Jesus and even greater works. Where have we gone wrong today? . . . . Why don't we have the power of the Spirit the disciples did? Why not? Because we haven't asked for it. Since I received the Baptism in the Spirit, I have seen miracles that I wouldn't have believed. I have seen a soldier with spinal meningitis, in a deep coma, with double pneumonia, given up by doctors and nurses to die, healed by the power of God.<sup>57</sup>

How do those who are involved in the charismatic movement relate to the sacraments of the Church? In the move that is made to allow God to come to a person directly through Spirit-baptism, is there a move away

from the visible means of God's coming to man in the sacraments? There are two different answers to that question. Donald G. Bloesch, Associate Professor of Theology at Dubuque Theological Seminary and a clergyman in the United Church of Christ, adopts the negative and says,

By separating the experience of the Baptism in the Spirit from the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and from Calvary itself this movement diverges from the mainstream of Christian tradition.<sup>58</sup>

On the other hand there is Harper who says, No, those involved in the charismatic movement do not desert the sacraments of the Church,

Again it must be stressed that the gifts of the Spirit are not modern replacements for sacraments. Those who have experienced the blessings of the Holy Spirit and the operation of the gifts on the whole have a much higher regard for the sacraments than they ever had before. For some the dryness and formality of much of the Church's ritual and sacraments is removed and the services come alive with new meaning and power.<sup>59</sup>

How do these neo-Pentecostals relate to the established church? Much of the publicity that one hears is of the trouble that has arisen between those who have been Spirit-baptized and those in the institutional church who have not and who deny that Spirit-baptism is a valid Christian experience. This would lead one to the conclusion that there is a great deal of friction between the two groups. To an extent this has been true, as will be illustrated in subsequent chapters, but this is certainly not the desire of those who are involved in the charismatic movement. On the contrary, says Bloesch,

The neo-Pentecostals desire to work with the established churches; they allow for the possibility of being filled with the Holy Spirit and not being able to speak in tongues; they wish to relate the gifts of the Spirit to the sacraments as confirmation and the laying on of hands; they seek to draw support from church fathers and from the reformers.<sup>60</sup>

However, things have not always worked out so amicably between the

neo-Pentecostals and the others in the established churches. There has been misunderstanding and resultant persecution and for this Harper says there is a logical explanation,

The Church tends to honour its revolutionary sons and daughters when they are safely buried. It burns its saints at the stake and then canonizes them, as with Joan of Arc. It closes the doors of its churches to its prophets and then builds monuments to them and fills its hymn-books with their compositions, as it did to the Wesleys. It prefers dead saints to living revolutionaries. Human nature has not changed very much since Christ charged the religious leaders of his day with doing the same thing.<sup>61</sup>

If the above words are correct, then the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod will have her share of saints, for Pastor C. Donald Pfothauer, a clergyman suspended from the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod because of his involvement in the charismatic movement, says that besides himself,

There are many others like Rodney Lensch in our Synod who have been forced out of their congregations because of this issue. The list is growing longer all the time. Some of the names are: Rev. Donald Krumsieg, Rev. Walter Krenz, Rev. John Kellog, Rev. Erwin Sprengler, and others.<sup>62</sup>

But just how extensive is the movement among the Lutheran churches and among The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod? In the second paragraph of this chapter attention was called to the difficulty of being statistically accurate. In the pamphlet Lutherans and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, published by the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship, there is a short news item by Willmar Thorkelson of the Minneapolis Star which says that "About two dozen pastors and several hundred laymen of The American Lutheran Church (ALC) have reported 'speaking in tongues' experiences."<sup>63</sup> The publication date of that pamphlet was 1966, four years ago, and the figures did not concern themselves with The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, but Pastor Robert Heil of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Crystal City,

Missouri, and a participant in the contemporary charismatic movement, states that he could come up with the names of at least forty pastors in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod who have had the baptism in the Holy Spirit and that he would guess that there were about 100 Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod pastors altogether who have had Spirit-baptism. This figure, he says, is supported by others who should be in the know.<sup>64</sup> Professor Andrew Schulze, Valparaiso University, says that the charismatic movement is not going to go away, but that the subject of Spirit-baptism and speaking in tongues "is bound to engage the attention of the entire church in the near future."<sup>65</sup>

Clearly the charismatic movement is here and it is growing. It is a misunderstood, deeply religious, phenomenon. Is there a logical reason why we are seeing it at this time in the history of the World? This is the concern of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### SOME POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS OF: WHY NOW?

Just why, the casual observer is tempted to ask, is there this emphasis on Spirit-baptism and the associated gifts of the Holy Spirit now when the Church has gotten along without them for so many years? If these things were in the Word of God all along, why did it take this long to discover them? Why is it that there appears to be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in these days?

These are questions which should be asked and for which one could offer different answers. First, we turn to a man who was not addressing himself to the charismatic movement, but was only trying to write a book on the Holy Spirit. However, in what he says, he comes close to stating the same reasons for the present-day charismatic movement as those offered by others. Retired Bishop of Bristol Frederick Arthur Cockin writes in his book God in Action about the nebulous position that the Holy Spirit has in the lives of ordinary Christians,

"I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life." There the words stand at the heart of one of the official creeds of the Christian Church. How many of those who accept that creed, still more who use it Sunday by Sunday in the Communion service, feel, as they say the words, that they are affirming a truth to which they attach real and significant meaning?<sup>66</sup>

He goes on to ask another question,

How many occasions are there in the experiences of the ordinary church member on which the reality of the Spirit forms the dominant theme in worship and instruction?<sup>67</sup>

Again, he states,

There are many occasions and seasons in the church in which we say that the Holy Spirit is present and especially active, but these ex-

periences pass by quickly without having made a deep and lasting impression.<sup>68</sup>

Those were the words of a man who was writing about 10 years ago and could hardly have heard of the contemporary charismatic movement when he wrote them. Yet in his lamenting the secondary role that the Holy Spirit plays in the lives of ordinary Christians, he came close to the words of an editorial which appeared recently in Expository Times. The author of these words was directing them to the contemporary charismatic movement. The words are,

It is a recurrent feature of Church History that when any fundamental Christian truth is persistently neglected in the central life of the Church that truth will reassert itself in the fringe-life of the Church, all too often in an exaggerated and unbalanced form. This process is now being re-enacted, and the issue involved is "The Gift of the Holy Spirit." Normal church life makes little more than formal acknowledgement of this gift. Sometimes it is even treated as an automatic accompaniment of Baptism, which the baptized person is assumed to possess whether he knows it or not. This is very different from the New Testament teaching where "The Holy Spirit appears as a sheer fact, God's recognizable witness to His own presence." His coming is a life-transforming experience, unmistakable to the person himself, and recognizable also by others (Acts 19:2).<sup>69</sup>

In the words of Frederick Danker, Professor of New Testamene Exegesis at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, the same argument is continued. He writes in This Day magazine,

The Church will do well, then, to ask how much room for the Holy Spirit is given in its worship and life. Too often the gifts of prophecy, of encouragement and consolation, are entrusted to official clergymen, who do all the work of a ministry which is to be shared by all God's people. What is forgotten is that the minister's job is to teach others how to minister. Moreover worship forms become fixed and stereo-typed, and little room is left for spontaniety in the public services. Whereas in the early Christian community various members of the congregation expressed petitions to God in the general assembly, today the clergyman usually takes care of all the public praying, and most gotten out of a book. Even public singing has made way for a concert-like atmosphere as the choir does more and more of the work of praising God in song.<sup>70</sup>

Cockin and Expository Times cited the little regard that has been given to the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians. Danker saw as the reason for the contemporary charismatic movement the lifeless character of modern worship life as compared with that of the early Church. There is no room for the Holy Spirit to work spontaneously and His freedom has to find expression in other ways.

Rev. Laurence Christenson takes the logic one step farther. He sees "the return of the charismata" as a counter-phenomenon to what historians are "beginning to characterize as the 'post-Christian' era." It is more than neglecting the Holy Spirit; it is more than lifelessness in the public worship, but according to Christenson, in a time of growing secularization, "People in significant numbers are turning to the Bible and personally experiencing some of the phenomena which marked the origins of Christianity."<sup>71</sup>

Not everyone sees the charismatic movement as positively. Father Kilian McDonnell, a prominent Roman Catholic authority, relates the movement to one of the aspects of the "contemporary quest for transcendence . . ." He elaborates by writing,

In the secular branch, self-transcendence is sought through the use of LSD, pot, through T-groups, sensitivity sessions and yoga exercises. Two representatives of the religious branch would be neo-Pentecostalism and the underground church.<sup>72</sup>

Finally, there are those, as Donald G. Bloesch, who see the charismatic movement as something which, although it contains the positive values of revitalizing persons in their faith, of upbuilding the church and of renewing dedication,<sup>73</sup> it is essentially a half-way station. He says that speaking in tongues is something that shouldn't be needed at all but

for some it is needed and,

should be seen as a crutch or psychic aid which can be of help to those who are children in the faith, to those struggling for deeper integration.<sup>74</sup>

He concludes by saying,

the charismatic revival reflects the yearning for security and certainty in an age of relativism and cynicism. This movement seeks the creation of a core of true believers in a time of mounting indifference to the claims of Biblical faith. Yet certainty is to be found not in extraordinary preternatural experiences but rather in faith alone. And faith is given through the preaching and hearing of the Word of God . . . . It is to be hoped that the adherents of neo-Pentecostalism will . . . move on toward maturity and focus their attention not on a fragment of the Christian truth but on the fullness of the truth.<sup>75</sup>

Logical explanations have been offered, but each one has been a little different. There does seem to be a common denominator to all of the explanations for the contemporary charismatic movement and that seems to be this seeking and need for something more in one's religious experience. Some see this negatively, and some see this positively.

Neo-Pentecostalism has not evaded the interests of the scientists and it is to some of their work on the movement itself and related phenomena that we now turn.



## CHAPTER V

### SOME PERTINENT SCIENTIFIC STUDIES

Although Pentecostal-type literature is freely available, if one knows where to go to find it, the same is not true for scientifically based literature on glossolalia and other Pentecostal phenomena. The charismatic would argue that that is the way that it should be. There are, nonetheless, some pertinent scientific studies. Certainly here that list will not be exhausted, but the ones that we cite are as follows: one on the sociological factors relative to the growth and spread of the Pentecostal movement; one in which the phenomena of glossolalia is studied linguistically; and one which considers the psychological factors relevant to glossolalia. If it seems applicable, we shall also allow someone in the charismatic movement to speak to the same point as the one treated by the scientist.

Luther P. Gerlach and Virginia Heine (mentioned in the first part of chapter III) state in a newspaper report that after having completed a three-year study of the Pentecostal movement "'speaking in tongues' is not limited to 'the discontented, the deprived or the deviant'." Of those who practice the gift, they say, "Our own judgment is that most of them are outstandingly stable individuals."<sup>76</sup>

Who is it, then, who becomes involved in Pentecostalism and in the contemporary charismatic movement? In an article reporting on their study, Gerlach and Heine report that although conditions of deprivation, social disorganization and psychological maladjustment may have had a great deal to do with the genesis of the movement known as "Pentecostal-

ism," yet there are "Five Factors" which better explain its development into a significant movement. These are: (1) an acephalous organizational structure in which the units are tied together in many and various ways; (2) face-to-face recruitment along lines of significant social relationships; (3) a deep commitment generated through some kind of transforming experience; (4) an ideology oriented to change, to the idea that one can do the impossible; and (5) an optimum amount of real or imagined opposition from outside sources. These factors are not limited in their application to only classical Pentecostalism, but they are playing into the spread of neo-Pentecostalism among the "main line" churches.<sup>77</sup> This study tends to discredit the popularly-held prejudicial view that followers of this movement are on the lower end of the social-economic-education scale.

A psychological and linguistic study of glossolalia was the purpose of a grant from HEW in 1964. Two Lutherans, Dr. John P. Kildahl and Dr. Paul A. Qualben, both on the clergy roster of The American Lutheran Church, were to be on the three-man team. Psychological tests were to be given to individuals in San Pedro, California, and Glendive, Montana, to members of the Lutheran churches in these two places who practiced the gift and to members who did not. It was to be an attempt to discover if there were any personality differences between the two groups, and what was the extent and duration of any feelings of well-being. Tape recordings of speaking in tongues were to be analyzed scientifically.<sup>78</sup> America magazine also reported the organization of this study,<sup>79</sup> but in neither America nor in Time nor in Lutheran Standard nor in any other publication did this author find the printed results of this study. A personal letter

to Dr. Kildahl has not been acknowledged at the time of this writing.

Nevertheless, there are psychological appraisals. Donald G. Bloesch tells his readers that it is almost the unanimous verdict of psychologists that glossolalia is not actual language but a type of ecstatic utterance. Possibly, he says, the phenomenon is linked to auto-hypnotism and suggestion. It is possibly a type of somnambulism--a trance-like state of dreams and visions. He also claims that glossolalists tend to be less integrated with society surrounding them than non-glossolalists.<sup>80</sup>

The above was the appraisal of one man, but it is not necessarily the feeling of those who have been Spirit-baptized and who practice the gift of glossolalia. Perhaps representative of them is Jerome Schoel, a pastor in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod and a graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1967. He comments on Professor Ralph Bohlmann's article on "Speaking in Tongues" which appeared in Lutheran Witness (May 14, 1963),

I object to the phrase "ecstatic utterances." . . . . I mention this because this is one of the common misunderstandings of Speaking in tongues. It is no language of ecstasy. It is not something that puts you in a state of ecstasy. It does bring joy, and sometimes even ecstasy, but this is not the common experience. It is also not something that is beyond one's control.<sup>81</sup>

The comments of James Hanson (p. 18) also support the contention that speaking in tongues is a rational experience, one in which one's "senses continue to operate."

Thus, one authority says that glossolalia comes out of a trance-like state and others say that there is no trance, but that the person is awake and aware of what is happening. Certainly, to those who are debating the issue, this difference of opinion means something. Here we can-

not resolve the discrepancy but can only state it.

Once again the scientists have the floor as we report on a linguistic study of glossolalia. William J. Samarin, a professional linguist, writes in the Hartford Quarterly that glossolalic utterances historically have not been limited to Christian settings. There are, he says, at least four different recorded cases in which this is the case.<sup>82</sup> In a footnote he points out that "glossolalists have recognized the existence, or the possibility, of non-Christian speaking in tongues, for example, in Spiritism or by people who, other evidence may have borne out, were not really 'baptized in the Spirit.' This kind of glossolalia they call a 'Satanic counterfeit.'"<sup>83</sup> Dr. Samarin points out that linguistically glossolalia does not meet the necessary criteria in order to be considered a language. He does admit that it may have some kind of emotive or affective meaning to the speaker and to those who hear it in a worship setting, though, strictly speaking, there is no linguistic meaning,<sup>84</sup> and when the speaking of a glossolalist is compared with the structure of his native language, the "glossa" is seen to be both derivative and innovative.<sup>85</sup>

Dr. Samarin was applying the strict laws of linguistics when he came to the conclusion that glossolalia could be no language. He did admit that it could have an "emotive or affective meaning." It is this aspect of glossolalia which is picked up by Rev. Laurence Christenson in his book Speaking in Tongues,

Speaking in tongues is a God-appointed manner of praying which can bypass the intellect. One may picture the difference something like this: A prayer with the mind comes upward from the heart, and must pass through a maze of linguistic, theological, rational, emotional, and personal checkpoints before it is released upward. By the time it "gets out" it may be little more than a slender trickle. An utterance in tongues comes upward from the depths, but instead of be-

ing channelled through the mind, it bypasses the mind and flows directly to God in a stream of Spirit-prompted prayer, praise and thanksgiving.<sup>86</sup>

A somewhat similar position is advanced by Thor Hall who says that there are disagreements as to whether or not glossolalia is communication, but to those who accept glossolalia,

what is usually called rational speech, even the more advanced understanding of language as a revelational event, is much too stale and unpliable to facilitate the free flow of the divine spirit. Furthermore, man himself is not seen simply as a "rational" being. He is a totality of many things, and the spirit of man is by no means exhausted in previously arranged words and phrases, in language neatly fitted together according to the accepted rules of grammar, sentence structure and logic. The Spirit may, in fact, be hindered by the restrictions involved in such matters.<sup>87</sup>

Arnold Bittlinger also upholds the notion that the phenomenon of speaking in tongues is really speaking in another language. It is not, he says,

an inarticulate babbling and rolling of the tongue. The tongue plays no other role in glossolalia than it does in normal speech. The Greek word glossa carries the force here exclusively of language.<sup>88</sup>

In conclusion to this chapter, we may say that the scientists have done those involved in the charismatic movement the favor of gaining for them some respectability. They have shown that a "Pentecostal" individual may very well be normal, stable, and intelligent. At the same time, most scientists take a dim view toward the accompanying phenomenon of glossolalia. Glossolalia does not meet enough of the necessary criteria of linguistics to be considered a real language. On the other hand, those who practice it defend it as communication, and even language.

Before turning to the final chapters and considering the problems that have arisen within the churches as a result of the charismatic move-

ment, we shall direct our attention to the pertinent sections of Scripture. The methodology will be to allow commentators to speak both with regard to specific sections and to the general tone of Scriptures.

## CHAPTER VI

### SOME RELEVANT EXEGETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Sections of Scripture advanced by those involved in the charismatic movement are not limited to only a few passages in the New Testament, but also range through the Old Testament. However, greater emphasis is placed upon the words of John the Baptizer in which he said that he was baptizing with water but someone else would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11 and parallel verses), the miracle of Pentecost and the accompanying phenomena (Acts 2:1-4ff), the Samaritan converts (Acts 8:14-17), the Gentile converts (Acts 10:44-48), and the Ephesian disciples (Acts 19:1-6), all receiving the Holy Spirit, and upon Paul's discussion of the gifts of the Spirit in I Corinthians 12-14. It is basically to the above passages that the following comments will apply.

Dr. Howard Tepker, Professor of Systematic Theology at Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, emphasizes the fact that the gifts of the Spirit were not confined to the New Testament times. In fact,

In the Old Testament the gifts of the Spirit consisted primarily in the ability to lead and govern the people of Israel in a time of crisis, or ability to erect the Tabernacle or Temple, or courage and strength to go into battle against a foe. Of special importance in the Old Testament was the Spirit's relation to the prophets, according to which the Spirit endowed the holy men with the ability correctly and accurately to transmit God's will to His people.<sup>89</sup>

Dr. Tepker had said previously of the Spirit's gifts in the New Testament as compared with the ones in the Old Testament,

The one principle difference between the Spirit's special gifts to God's people in the Old Testament and his gifts to those in the New Testament consisted in this that in the new covenant not only would the leaders in Israel receive extra-ordinary gifts, but the average believer would be thus endowed.<sup>90</sup>

Walter J. Bartling, Professor of New Testament Exegesis at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, picks up this point of Dr. Tepker's that in the New Testament the average member is endowed by the Spirit. He writes,

For Paul the congregation lives entirely in and of the Spirit, that Spirit who calls every member to service and endows each with unique gifts for service to that body which is not just a collection of individuals but a congregation, a multi-functioning organism.<sup>91</sup>

Dale Moody says that it is like "a large charismatic circle" in which all are blessed and endowed "but some members with unusual gifts and qualifications are set aside for special ministries that have official status."<sup>92</sup> But, says Stephen S. Smalley of Paul's emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit,

the emphasis is without doubt on the corporate sharing of personal gifts by members of the soma christou, rather than on the structured hierarchy of those who are endowed with particular gifts.<sup>93</sup>

Finally, in support of what Bartling, Moody and Smalley have said, Bittlinger comments on this commonness of those who possess these gifts of the Spirit,

Paul knew no distinction between natural and supernatural gifts, between ordinary and extraordinary ministries. For him, all the activities of a Christian are saturated with the Spirit of God.<sup>94</sup>

However, it is not always the case that the gifts of the Spirit are utilized for the common good and for the upbuilding of the church. This is the case today and it was the case at the congregation in Corinth. The bone of contention, in both cases, is usually the "tongues" issue. Commenting on I Corinthians 14:20-25, J. P. M. Sweet, professor at Selwyn College in Cambridge, Great Britain, says of this improper use of the gift,



Today, on the one hand, it is claimed, or suggested, that tongues are the normal, if not the exclusive sign of the reception of the Spirit, and that there is something lacking in any Christian who has not had this experience. This is precisely what Paul wished to deny in these chapters: they make up a unified polemic against such an over-valuation, in which XIII plays an integral part, and put a corrective emphasis on prophecy. On the other hand, anti-Pentecostals may be inclined to over-emphasize Paul's disapproval. For example, it is said that he more or less forbids the public use of tongues.<sup>95</sup>

Since the phenomenon of glossolalia is an identifying feature of the charismatic movement, the final comments in this chapter will be confined to different exegetical comments on it.

In general, the exegetes are cautious about glossolalia. Donald G. Bloesch, for example, says that Paul regarded it as a special charism given for the purpose of one's own spiritual edification, but a charism which had a subordinate position to other gifts. He adds that the gift of tongues, according to Paul, was not to be cultivated, but it was a stepping stone to something higher--pure faith and love.<sup>96</sup>

Gerhard Krodel, theological professor in The American Lutheran Church, amplifies Paul's cautious attitude toward speaking in tongues. He says that Paul recognized the value of speaking in tongues as a devotional aid, but, because of its limited value, Paul carefully cited the dangers and restrictions under which the gift was to be practiced. Krodel adds that Paul

(saw the dangers of glossolalia, but he would not forbid it, because forbidding it would amount to quenching the Spirit. Instead, he structured it in public worship, and, contrary to widespread belief, he valued it least among the gifts of the Spirit, but a gift of the Spirit it was, nevertheless.<sup>97</sup>)

"A gift of the Spirit it was," and of this gift Arnold Bittlinger says that Paul makes at least three positive statements: (1) I Corinthians

12:28: "God has appointed . . . various kinds of languages." The gift has value because God ordained it; (2) I Corinthians 14:2: "For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God . . . . He utters mysteries in the Spirit." The Spirit that is dwelling in man speaks to God in a way that is incomprehensible to man; and (3) I Corinthians 14:4: "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself." It is a kind of meditation and release which is constructive to faith.<sup>98</sup>

Finally, as noted by Dr. Tepker, although Paul does warn of the abuses of glossolalia,

(never does he forbid that it be practiced among the Corinthians. Never does he caution that it is of the Devil, or that it is sin. His warning is directed against the abuse of this spiritual gift.<sup>99</sup>)

In conclusion and summary of this chapter we might say that it is to the whole Christian Church, the body of Christ, that the Spirit bestows His gifts. These gifts are the common possession of the whole body, and are shared by all members. In certain times and in special ways the Holy Spirit gives special gifts. One of these gifts, emphasized in the contemporary charismatic movement, is the gift of tongues. Of it the Word of God says that it is a gift of the Spirit, a lesser gift, but a gift. Also, it is a gift which easily leads to misunderstanding and confusion. The Word of God, however, does not forbid its use, but only its abuse or misuse.

It is this misunderstanding and confusion which is the subject matter of the succeeding chapters. We shall first ask the question of why does this movement cause divisiveness and then we shall see how different Lutheran groups deal with the situation.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE DIVISIVENESS FACTOR

People have become quite upset about the charismatic movement because it is claimed that it always results in divisiveness and controversy in the local congregation. This certainly has been the case in a number of instances, although not always, and in a subsequent section more space will be given to the question of how the church deals with the unfortunate situations that do arise. First, let us consider what may be the dynamics causing divisiveness.

We turn first to J. P. M. Sweet who analyzes the situation at Corinth this way,

In 12:1-3 he (Paul) asserts in effect that all Christians are pneumatikoi by virtue of their baptismal confession. . . . a Christian ceases to be pneumatikoi only if he ceases to be a Christian. Chapter 12 as a whole asserts that diversity and the actual authenticity of the Spirit's gifts. In other words pneumatic status is being denied at Corinth to those who cannot produce the more showy manifestations like glossolalia, and claimed exclusively for those who do.<sup>100</sup>

Sweet is saying that the fault lies on the side (at least in this case) of those who possess spiritual gifts, or certain preferred spiritual gifts, and claim spiritual superiority over and against those who do not. Certainly, this can be a dynamic that is in operation today also.

The same point of view is expressed by Professor Walter J. Bartling who was writing in Concordia Theological Monthly,

There could be, and in Corinth there evidently was, a speaking about Spiritual gifts and a pride in charismatic endowment in which these gifts became important in themselves--separate from the Lordship of Christ. They became the guarantee of the Spirit. They became the undeniable proof that a man was pneumatic and had the Spirit. The Spirit was privatized and made the cloistered possession of the few. It is obvious that certain charismata counted for more in Corinth

than others: charismata like tongue speaking, which in its ecstatic and enthusiastic character marked the possessors as privileged men of the Spirit.<sup>101</sup>

Of course, Professor Bartling also recognizes the other side of the coin, the other reason why there may have been divisiveness at Corinth, as well as why it could exist today,

(But if they (the gifts of the Spirit) are employed in loving service, and if there are those who pridefully disdain them because they go beyond the realm of their own limited experiences, who really are those who are divisive? Who then are the sectarians? When a glossolalist, for example, claims that his gift has opened him up to a life of joyful witness and has given him new vitality in the highest gift of love, who am I to say that he is deluding himself?<sup>102</sup>)

Thus, in all fairness, recognition has to be given to the two-sidedness of most divisiveness situations. This, too, is expressed in a letter from Pastor Jerome Schoel to Professor Ralph Bohlmann in which the former comments to Bohlmann on his article, "Speaking in Tongues", which appeared in the Lutheran Witness (May 14, 1963),

Why does this cause divisions? I believe it is because there is already a division between the flesh and the Spirit. In other words, people may be motivated by the flesh to react violently to others who have been filled with the Holy Spirit. Or those filled with the Spirit may in the flesh become too pushy and snobbish to those who haven't received. I believe the fault lies on both sides, because I have seen it. And you yourself know there are always people in a congregation who have God on their terms and do not want to commit their total lives to Him.<sup>103</sup>

Often the specific bone of contention is the speaking in tongues and Rev. Laurence Christenson expresses, again, the two factors which may be at work in causing the trouble:

Why does this speaking in tongues so often result in divisiveness? Denominations, congregations, even families, get split over it. What's behind it?

.....

If an objective observer were to enter a situation where divisive-

ness had occurred over speaking in tongues, he would likely find two dynamics at work, in varying proportions, depending on the particular situation.

1) Lack of wisdom, decency, and order in the use of the gift, or in conversation and witness concerning it.

2) A rejection or suppression of the gift in the congregation.

.....

If people involved in a situation of divisiveness . . . see clearly these two dynamics they will have gone a long way toward bringing about a spirit of love and harmony.<sup>104</sup>

In answer to the question as to what to do when there develops this divisiveness, Michael Harper says,

This fundamental conflict between the flesh or human element and the Spirit or divine is at the basis of much division in the church. The only way to resolve the tension is for all to walk 'in the Spirit' and then there will be no 'self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another' (Gal. 5:16, 26).<sup>105</sup>

Two dynamics usually are playing into the situations of divisiveness and as we, in the chapters that follow, treat the different Lutheran churches and the reactions of each the two dynamics will have to be kept in mind. It will not always be possible to say that "This is the fault of the charismatics!" or "This is the fault of those who jealously assert that they do not need the baptism of the Spirit!" but the two dynamics will be there.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE REACTIONS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCHES

It might be said that when Lutherans participate in the charismatic movement they are in good company, according to a portion of a letter that Luther wrote in 1545 to a friend asking advice about a sick person.

Michael Harper carries the quote:

When you depart lay your hands upon the man and say, "These signs shall follow them that believe: they shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover."<sup>106</sup>

A very similar comment of Martin Luther on Mark 16:17-18 is reported by

Rev. Christenson:

These signs (including speaking in new tongues) should be interpreted as applying to every individual Christian. When a person is a Christian, he has faith, and he shall also have the power to do these signs.<sup>107</sup>

With this introduction we begin to consider each Lutheran group in the United States in turn, beginning with the larger groups and proceeding to the smaller. The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod will be considered in a separate chapter.

#### The American Lutheran Church

Mention was made in Chapter II of some instances of charismatic phenomena in The American Lutheran Church. It was also stated that the ALC had formed a special committee to study the contemporary charismatic gifts. Their report constitutes the official reaction of The American Lutheran Church. In 1964 three different essays, prepared by that committee, were adopted by the Church Council of the ALC: Glossolalia in the New Testament, Report of the Committee on Spiritual Gifts, and a

Statement with Regard to Speaking in Tongues.<sup>108</sup>

The following statements, lifted from these reports, indicates the cautious, but open, official position and reaction of The American Lutheran Church,

Speaking in tongues is one of the several gifts of the Spirit described in Scripture.<sup>109</sup>

The integration of speaking in tongues into the life of a Lutheran congregation has proved very difficult, for both pastor and people. Divisions and tensions have been found in varying degrees in the congregations where glossolalia is known to exist.<sup>110</sup>

The following were consecutive comments:

5. The experience of glossolalia is no guarantee of Christian maturity and knowledge. Doctrinal instruction must be given promptly to those needing it, especially if they are to be received into church membership and accept positions of responsibility in the congregation.

6. The pastor who does not speak in tongues is just as responsible for the spiritual well-being of glossolalists in his flock as for the soul care of members who are not.<sup>111</sup>

The following were some of the suggestions of the special committee:

The Christian congregation should recognize that the spiritual life of Christians can be deepened by a variety of spiritual experiences.<sup>112</sup>

If glossolalia is practiced, its use should be in harmony with the spirit of Paul's words in I Cor. 12-14.<sup>113</sup>

Speaking in tongues in private for the individual's personal edification is not to be forbidden.<sup>114</sup>

Let the Church pray that more of its people be "faithful to their covenant of Baptism even unto the end." It is urged that the whole Christian Church "continue to pray regularly for the gifts of the Holy Spirit with the assurance that this prayer is being and will continue to be answered."<sup>115</sup>

This has been the official reaction of The American Lutheran Church, to get out the Scriptures and study them in the light of events around them. The reaction of the ALC has been cautious, but not condemnatory.<sup>116</sup>

Parish pastor in the ALC James H. Hanson, one who was and still is involved in the contemporary charismatic movement, comments as follows on the reaction of the ALC both to him and in general:

I would assess the situation in the A. L. C. as being the stance of Gamaliel--that of watching and observing. . . . I can simply say that I have found no particular bias addressed to me on the part of the officialdom of the A. L. C.<sup>116</sup>

#### The Lutheran Church in America

A letter to the president of The Lutheran Church in America prompted this brief response:

The Lutheran Church in America has taken no official action with regard to speaking in tongues. . . .

Problems have arisen in a few congregations. Synod presidents have been involved in counselling pastors and congregations. In one instance a question arose with regard to a candidate for ordination. Again it was a synod that was involved because synods in the Lutheran Church in America have the power of admitting men to the ministry and have responsibility for overseeing ministers and congregations.

Then there followed a listing of the names and addresses of four constituent synods of The Lutheran Church in America and the suggestion to write individually "to those to determine whether any official action has been taken."<sup>117</sup>

Such letters were written to the four synods. The following is the reply of the president of the Pacific Northwest Synod:

In the Pacific Northwest Synod, there have been very few manifestations of this charismatic phenomena. Where it has occurred, I have involved myself immediately with the pastor to counsel him in ways in which this demonstration of the work of the Holy Spirit is understood by the church and how it may best be interpreted to the congregation. As a synod, we have taken no official position on this matter.<sup>118</sup>

The president of the Pacific Southwest Synod of The Lutheran Church in America responded this way:



No, we have not taken an official position. However, my own personal position has been this: if it is of the Spirit, it cannot be stopped; if it is not, it will fall of its own weight. Basically, that is the stance I take. Practically, I have found that in congregations where the so-called charismatic phenomena have occurred, the congregations have been ripped apart, non-Christian attitudes have developed, and usually the ministers have had to leave. I find it hard to believe that results of this nature are consistent with the spirit of love and understanding which is inherent in the Gospel.<sup>119</sup>

The President of the Lutheran Church in America suggested that this author write to the offices of the Central States Synod of the LCA in regard to how they have dealt with problems surrounding involvement in the charismatic movement. However, the reply of the Central States Synod was that "in the knowledge of this office there is no congregation in which such phenomena has occurred or caused difficulties" in this synod.<sup>120</sup>

It was also suggested by the president of the LCA to this author that he write to the president of the Minnesota Synod of the LCA for information regarding how that synod had dealt with problems surrounding manifestations of charismatic phenomena. Two different letters, written over a period of one month have yet to be acknowledged or answered. The following excerpts from the Minneapolis Star, however, indicate that the LCA in Minnesota has not been untouched by the charismatic movement,

The Rev. Jack Jackson left the pastorate of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church (LCA) Minneapolis, in 1965 after some members objected to his practice of charismatic gifts and reported him to officials of the LCA's Minnesota Synod.

and,

The Rev. Louis L'Heureux was pastor of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church (LCA), St. Paul, before his charismatic ministry became controversial and he resigned in July, 1966 . . . . Mr. L'Heureux had earlier been a missionary to Japan and had great difficulty with the Japanese language. After receiving baptism of the Holy Spirit, he said he found he was speaking in tongues in Japanese and could preach fluently in Japanese.<sup>121</sup>

### The Wisconsin Synod

In the order of decreasing size, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod is next and the following is the reply of President Naumann:

After inquiry of several brethren, also quite widely acquainted in our Synod, my first reaction was confirmed. We know of no instances of charismatic phenomena that have occurred in our church and hence have no reaction to report to you.<sup>122</sup>

### Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches

According to the 1970 edition of the Lutheran Annual, the next largest grouping of Lutherans in the United States is the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.<sup>123</sup> A letter to President Ontko prompted the reply that there have been no specific instances of charismatic phenomena in the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.<sup>124</sup>

### Evangelical Lutheran Synod

The Lutheran Annual lists the Evangelical Lutheran Synod as the next largest Lutheran body in the United States,<sup>125</sup> and the reply of President Orvick is similar to that of the SELC: "To the best of my knowledge there has been no such manifestation (of charismatic phenomena) in our church body and hence no official reaction."<sup>126</sup>

### Church of the Lutheran Confession

The following was the response of Pastor F. Nolting, Secretary for the Church of the Lutheran Confession: "There have been no instances of charismatic phenomena in our churches that have come to my attention."<sup>127</sup> Later in the letter there was the following negative comment regarding

the contemporary charismatic movement:

Concerning the former (glossolalia) you may find the observation fruitful that enthusiasm for and alleged occurrence of glossolalia seems to increase in direct proportion to a decrease in concern for prophecy. In instances that have come to my attention among Lutherans and in other established denominations the people who cry "Spirit, Spirit," and become ecstatic over speaking in tongues are precisely the ones who are quite freely abandoning the eternal truths revealed by the Spirit in and by the Word--the Holy Bible. They seem eager to disregard confessional fellowship, created by the Spirit in and through the Word, for a more elastic emotional fellowship of those claiming to have common experiences with "the Spirit." People who claim to have experienced "the Spirit," while at the same time rejecting the Spirit's basic and sufficient revelation in the Word of the prophets and Apostles are, indeed, under the influence of a "spirit," but certainly not the Holy Spirit.<sup>128</sup>

#### Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

The following was the response of Pastor John P. Strand, President of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations:

The Association has been remarkably untouched by this movement for which we are very grateful. Some folks who were involved with the charismatic movement were for a while involved to some extent with the Association, but were given no encouragement nor permission to promote the gift of tongues, subsequently they have not been troubling the Association for the last several years. I believe that where a church body has a Spirit-led concern for the salvation of souls and real living Christianity, the contemporary charismatic movement has very little appeal. So often when the spiritual life in a church is in a low ebb, there is an increased interest in either more liturgics or charismatic phenomena.<sup>129</sup>

That letter also contained a copy of a statement adopted by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations as their official position regarding the contemporary charismatic movement. Here is a representative sentence from that statement:

The Board of Administration of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations will not knowingly admit anyone to the clergy roster who does not have the Scriptural and Lutheran understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit, nor who, as a result, promotes speaking in tongues.<sup>130</sup>

### Church of the Lutheran Brethren

In the 7000-member Church of the Lutheran Brethren<sup>131</sup> there has been unusually high degree of charismatic activity over the past years. This becomes evident in the reply of the first vice-president of that synod to a letter from this author. He summarizes,

We have had 4 ordained pastors, and one intern, who have been involved in the modern charismatic movement. Only one of the five is still on the clergy roster of our synod. Our experience has been that these men have become schismatic and divisive. In no specific instance were they specifically removed from the roster because they spoke in tongues. I Corinthians 14:39 states that we should not forbid to speak in tongues. One pastor still on our roster has spoken in tongues for some years, but has not allowed it to become the focal point of schism.<sup>132</sup>

There then follows five brief paragraphs in which each of the five cases in which there was some trouble with certain pastors and one intern are described.<sup>133</sup> The writer concludes by writing,

Our policy has been, then, to tolerate the use and exercise of gifts. When this exercise of gifts becomes divisive of the body of Christ, it cannot be tolerated. Unfortunately, the charismatic movement has been, in our experience, terribly divisive.<sup>134</sup>

### Apostolic Lutheran Church of America

No reply or acknowledgement has been received to two separate letters that have been sent to the president of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of America over the period of the past month and one half.

### In Summary and Conclusion to this Chapter

The Lutheran churches have not been untouched by the contemporary charismatic movement. Instances in which a specific synod had no known manifestations are insignificant because of the relatively small size of

that synod. The exception here is the Wisconsin Synod which is large enough so that one might expect that there would be some instances of charismatic phenomena in it. The exception at the other end of the spectrum is that in the relatively small Church of the Lutheran Brethren there should be so much charismatic activity. One might explain this, however, by citing the pietistic background and practice of the Lutheran Brethren. Also, a small, closely-knit group, as the Church of the Lutheran Brethren makes it easy for the fast spread of a popular idea or movement.

The reactions and official pronouncements of the different Lutheran groups have by no means been the same. In some cases, of course, there has been no official reaction or pronouncement, only opinion. Essentially, the tone of the pronouncements and opinions is somewhat negative toward the contemporary charismatic movement. Officially, the ALC seems to be the least negative and the LCA the most negative, although the LCA's reactions are not official.

The above paragraphs do not apply to The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. In the following chapter we shall trace more closely the reactions of this Lutheran body to the contemporary charismatic movement.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE REACTION OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD

#### Concordia Theological Monthly

Strictly speaking, we should confine ourselves to the reactions of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod since about 1960, the date of the start of the contemporary charismatic movement. However, in the Concordia Theological Monthly, theological journal for Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod pastors, articles relating to charismatic gifts, such as speaking in tongues and prophecies, begin in 1930. To be sure, articles appearing before 1960 did not concern themselves with the contemporary charismatic movement, but what they said does shed light on the theological feeling of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. Almost unanimously the opinion is expressed that the Word of God does not say that special charismatic gifts were to have ended with the end of the Apostolic Age, but that this seems to have been the case. Let us allow the CTM to speak for itself.

In October, 1930, William F. Arndt addressed himself to the question: "Does the Bible teach that only Christians of the Apostolic Age would possess miraculous powers?" After citing several passages from Scripture which have been used to argue the affirmative answer to the above question, and after having refuted these arguments, Arndt goes on to say,

(as far as I know, there is no argument from Scripture by which we could show that the charismatic gifts of the Spirit were intended only for the early Christians.)

Arndt goes on to downgrade the various sects who claim to have extraordinary Spiritual gifts which, they say, prove the superiority of their religion.<sup>135</sup>

Three years later, in July, 1933, O. Lübke gave a similar treatment to the same subject. He posed the question: "Wie ist denen zu begegnen, die Wundergaben, besonders neue Offenbarungen, vorgeben?" He admits that there can be some ambiguity in answering this question,

Wir Christen, namentlich wir Pastoren, sollten darüber Bescheid wissen. Es ist auch nicht zu leugnen, dass rechtgläubige Lutherische Theologen in dieser Frage nicht immer gleiche Rede geführt haben, und das ist noch heute der Fall.

Lübke goes on to state that Walther had argued against there being another outpouring of Spiritual gifts, but that Luther had an entirely different view. The words of Luther on this subject are: "Darum, wo ein Christen-Mensch ist, da ist noch die Gewalt, solche Zeichen zu tun, <sup>wenn</sup> es vonnöten ist." Lübke concludes that there may be such a phenomenon as prophesying the future, but that the kind that was going on in 1933 was such that it contradicted the Holy Scriptures and, thus, could not be considered to be valid.<sup>136</sup>

In August, 1933, Theodore Graebner, in dealing with the larger context of "demoniacal possession", took a very dim view of glossolalia, calling it a mark of possession,

Since rational speech is the highest gift of God to man, it is not surprising that Satan should abuse and disorganize in a most fiendish way this supreme endowment of humanity. In the disturbance variously called "gift of tongues," "ecstatic speech," "speaking in tongues," we therefore are justified in recognizing a mark of possession whenever it occurs in connection with religious phenomena not originating in the Spirit's operations through the divine Word of God.<sup>137</sup>

Writing of "St. Paul's usus practicus of Holy Baptism" in 1948, J. T. Mueller says in reference to the Corinthian misuse of the charismata which the Holy Spirit had poured upon them,

These Spirit-given gifts . . . did much to disrupt the Church, since they caused envy among the vainglorious members, who desired especial-

ly those gifts that were outstanding and enhanced their personal prestige.<sup>138</sup>

In this case it might be pointed out that J. T. Mueller's negative view of Spiritual gifts is not of the gifts themselves, but it lies in the esteem that these gifts had among the different people and how they were used.

In 1951, in an article on "The Public Ministry in the Apostolic Age", H. Brueggemann devotes a small section to "The Charismata". He points out that in the New Testament evidence the charismata referred to all manner of endowments possessed by Christians in the congregations. In conclusion, Brueggemann says,

(The fact that individuals of the Apostolic Age possessed charismata which are no longer in evidence in the Church today should lead no one to the conclusion that the bestowal of charismata terminated with the first century.<sup>139</sup>)

Brueggemann thus follows the line of argument employed by Arndt and Lübke.

In a conference paper which appeared in CTM in 1954, "The Doctrine of the Call", William F. Arndt appears to have changed his position since 1930 when he said that there was no evidence from Scripture that the special gifts of the Spirit were only for the early Christians. In "The Doctrine of the Call" he concludes that these special gifts have ceased and we have no proof that the Lord intends to bring them back, although it is in his power to do so. He says,

(In the early Christian Church God called people directly and endowed them with special so-called charismatic gifts for the spreading of the Gospel . . . . All of these special gifts have ceased to exist. The Church was founded and has spread. These gifts are no longer needed. We do not deny that there could be prophets in our midst like the prophets in the early Christian Church if God desired that this institution should come back to life. The power of the Lord is just as great now as it was two thousand years ago. But we have no proof that such is His will. The charismatic gifts, like those of the Apostolate, have become extinct.<sup>140</sup>)



The two following articles, written after 1960, relate directly to the contemporary charismatic movement. The first was written by Victor Bartling, Professor of New Testament Exegesis at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and the second was written by Walter J. Bartling, son of Victor, also Professor of New Testament Exegesis at Concordia, St. Louis.

In the article "Notes on 'Spirit-Baptism' and 'Prophetic Utterances'" by Victor Bartling (November, 1968) there is an attitude of openness toward the contemporary charismatic movement. Bartling points out that there are really not very many passages in the New Testament to which the charismatic can point and say that this shows that these people were speaking in tongues as we are. However, adds Bartling, one

must be open to the theoretical possibility that the Spirit may use these modern alleged charisms for His purpose, but surely not in contradiction to the Spirit-given directives and controls set forth especially in I Corinthians 14:26-33.<sup>141</sup>

With "The Congregation of Christ--A Charismatic Body" (February, 1969), Walter J. Bartling presents to the reader the text of a paper presented at a conference in Coon Rapids, Minnesota, on the charismatic movement. The general thrust of the article is that every congregation is a charismatic body, the body of Christ, empowered by His Spirit. At times, as at Corinth, the situation becomes cloudy. Bartling writes,

(The congregation at Corinth was distorted not because it was charismatic, but in spite of its charismatic endowment. Or, if you will, it was a perverted version of what charismatic endowment entails in congregational life that created the problems. The cure does not lie in the eradication of the charisma, for that cure would kill the patient.<sup>142</sup>)

Bartling goes on to elaborate on what Paul had said was the proper way in which these charismatic gifts were to be practiced in the congregation in Corinth,

(Paul is revolutionary precisely because he shifts the accent from the bizzare, from that which radically distinguishes the few, and focuses attention on service to that body into which all have been baptized in the "one Spirit." If the entire body is charismatic, is it not because each member is charismatically endowed? The picture of the body, each member functioning with his gift or gifts, implies no less.<sup>143</sup>)

Of course, the situation in which Bartling first spoke these words was one which called for him to say more than only about that which happened at Corinth. What about these gifts for today? Bartling says,

In speaking of such gifts I fear I would be like a blind man talking about colors. But let me quickly add: I have learned from Paul and, I believe, from the Spirit of God that I must be open to any possibility.<sup>144</sup>

Finally, Bartling concludes, somewhat ambiguously, but in general positively, regarding present-day charismata,

We must direct two questions to ourselves. Must we not realize that we constantly resist becoming that which God through His Spirit would have us be? Must we not pray constantly that God would make us that which of ourselves we can never be: Christians, members of His Body?<sup>145</sup>

Thus spoke the theologians of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. For the most part, they have left open the possibility that the Holy Spirit could move in special ways, pouring Himself out now as He did in the past. The conclusions reached have been sought directly in God's Word and, in general, the conclusions have been open-minded toward present-day charismata.

#### Reaction in Three Specific Cases

The Reaction of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod with regard to three different pastors--Rodney Lensch, C. Donald Pfothenauer, and Robert Heil--are somewhat familiar to this author. The former two have been dropped from the clergy roster of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

The latter is pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Crystal City, Missouri. Some of the details surrounding the involvement of each in the charismatic movement follow.

The account of Rodney Lensch having to leave his congregation in California and the ministry of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod is told in a pamphlet which he wrote, A Missouri Synod Lutheran Pastor is Baptized in the Holy Spirit. He writes what happened when he told the officers of his congregation of his experience,

When I testified to my congregational leaders some six months following my baptism in the Spirit the general consensus was that I had been psychologically duped. Yet in fairness to me and the several parishioners who had also received the Holy Spirit, an extensive study was made of the whole phenomenon. The end result was a resolution that virtually called a moratorium on any preaching or testifying of this experience and its subsequent manifestations. Because the experience was so un-Lutheran in character and had never been dealt with in any official resolution or confession of the Synod the proposed resolution was unanimously passed by the congregation.<sup>146</sup>

Rodney Lensch writes that he tried to abide by the moratorium on preaching and teaching about the experience of Spirit-Baptism hoping that the people would come around and realize what God was doing. His hopes were too high. Some families could no longer accept his ministry. Members left the congregation. Meetings with congregational leaders and synodical officials produced no results. Six months after the original moratorium, Lensch states that he wrote out a statement of conscience and a statement on how a congregation should react to such a move of the Spirit. He called for a congregational meeting to present the papers and ask for a vote of confidence. He writes, "This proposal met with the favor of both the congregational and synodical leaders." However, the results were that, "By a margin of eight ballots I was denied my vote of confidence. My only alternative was to resign as pastor then and there."<sup>147</sup>

How does Lensch feel about the way in which the church, both local and denominational, reacted in his case? In personal conversation he reveals that he is not bitter, but hopeful of what the future will bring. However, his own comment is, "The Lutheran Church is treating me like the Roman Catholic Church treated Luther."<sup>148</sup>

The case of C. Donald Pfothenauer is much too involved to treat in detail and his suspension from the ministry is in a present state of appeal. Thus, in this case, we will only quote from publically known and available documents.

An article in a Minneapolis newspaper entitled "Charismatic Movement Gains" says of Pfothenauer,

Another Lutheran pastor caught up in the charismatic movement is the Rev. C. Donald Pfothenauer, pastor of Way of the Cross Lutheran Church, Coon Rapids.

His activity has brought him into difficulty with officials of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod and his congregation has been warned that it must either replace him or lose its church through foreclosure.<sup>149</sup>

Another newspaper article from a Minneapolis newspaper states later developments. The Minnesota South District of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod did foreclose and began district-sponsored services in the building which housed the former Way of the Cross congregation. According to the article, President Lieske of the Minnesota South District asserted that Pastor Pfothenauer's promotion of the "gifts" of the Spirit had brought "fragmentation and schism." Pastor Pfothenauer's words were, "We simply feel it necessary to maintain our witness. We can't deny it."<sup>150</sup> Subsequent to this, Pastor Pfothenauer was suspended from the ministry of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.<sup>151</sup>

Admittedly the details in the two cases cited above were very limited. They were not intended to give a complete history of each situation, only to illustrate a particular reaction. As pointed out in the previous chapter, there are two dynamics at work. It is not our purpose, nor within our ability, to say which one has dominated in each of the two cases.

In the final specific case which will be mentioned, that of Pastor Robert Heil of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Crystal City, Missouri, we are dealing with a pastor who has been baptized in the Holy Spirit and who has utilized the gifts of the Spirit in his ministry, but in this case there has been no schism or fragmentation.

The following is a brief overview gained through a personal interview with Pastor Heil. In April, 1968, he scheduled a meeting of Missouri Synod pastors for those who were interested in Spirit-baptism and the contemporary charismatic movement. The meeting was to be held at Immanuel Lutheran Church. Four months before this he himself had been baptized in the Holy Spirit, but up to the time of the meeting his congregation did not know of it. During the course of the meeting, at which time the members of the congregation came into contact with the visiting pastors, there were twelve people in the congregation who received Spirit-baptism. More received it as time went on. There was little opposition and the prayer of those who had the gift was always, "Lord, help us not to go too fast so that we offend others!" At the present time about fifty members of the congregation have received Spirit-baptism. Five different prayer groups have been organized, some of which meet in the church building, some of which meet in private homes. The groups are not necessarily

limited to Lutherans. To the present time things have gone along relatively smoothly.

What has been the kind and intensity of the reaction of the members of the congregation? Pastor Heil reports that there have been the three normal reactions among the members: (1) the reaction of whole-heartedly accepting Spirit-baptism; (2) the reaction of completely rejecting Spirit-baptism; and (3) the reaction accepted by most--to try to stand in the middle, adopting a kind of "wait and see" attitude.<sup>152</sup>

Admittedly, this account, too, is very brief. However, it does relate one instance in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod in which the use and presence of the charismatic gifts in a congregation has not precipitated an open rift in that congregation.

#### Official Reaction

An overture asking for an official study of the charismatic gifts and their relevance for the church today was submitted to the 1969 convention of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. The overture was passed by the convention and the wording of the resolution, which follows, is very similar to the wording of the original overture:

Whereas, Charismatic gifts (e.g. "Spirit-Baptism," speaking in tongues, healing, prophecy, etc) are specifically mentioned in the New Testament; and

Whereas, Reports of Charismatic manifestations are becoming more frequent and widespread, also within the Synod; and

Whereas, Controversies and divisions have arisen in certain areas of the Synod in relation to this matter; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod request the Commission on Theology and Church relations to make a comprehensive study of the charismatic movement with special emphasis on its exegetical aspects and theological implications; and be it further

Resolved, That the Commission on Theology and Church Relations be encouraged to involve in its study brethren who claim to have received the baptism of the Spirit and the related gifts; and be it finally

Resolved, That the commission's report be made available to pastors, teachers, congregations, and conferences as soon as practicable.<sup>154</sup>

To date, the requested report has not been completed and, thus, all that we can do is state that the Commission on Theology and Church Relations has been asked to prepare it.

#### In Conclusion and Summary to this Chapter

In a way, this chapter is not complete enough. Many of the articles quoted from Concordia Theological Monthly did not speak directly to the contemporary charismatic movement. The examples of reaction in specific cases may not be representative of the grass roots reaction. Nothing specific can be said about the report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations is preparing.

On the other hand, we have said what could be said. Past articles in Concordia Theological Monthly do indicate something of the thinking in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod at this time. The pattern of reaction in the first two cases cited have too many similarities not to be representative of something more general. The reaction in the case of Pastor Heil may be similar to the reaction in many other cases and the reason why we do not hear of them. The wording of the resolution passed by the convention of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod does indicate an attitude.

Where do we go from here? In the final chapter we shall back up and take a look at the whole situation once more.

## CHAPTER X

### SOME CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

It appears that the contemporary charismatic movement is an issue with which the church will be faced more and more. This is not something which has allowed itself to be held back but has been arising in most of the established denominations. Those who are involved in it see the movement as the direct working of the Holy Spirit, pouring out His gifts on people today who ask out of faith. These people are closely Scriptural and deeply religious. Their experience with the Holy Spirit has been something that strengthens their faith, increases their love and concern for God and one another, and gives them greater zeal in witnessing. This very positive aspect of the movement cannot be denied. At the same time, these people, for the most part, do not wish to disassociate themselves from the established churches to which they belong but desire to incorporate their Spirit-baptism into their entire religious experience.

On the other hand, granted that the Church may have tended to ignore some of the Scriptural passages to which the charismatic would point, yet there is a very negative element in which many of the specific situations (which are supposedly works of the Holy Spirit) have worked out. In these situations, were those leading in the charismatic movement more at fault than those who were opposed to it? Could it be that respected officials in the Church have falsely interpreted things or could it be that they are fighting so hard to preserve their position and their security that they keep their eyes closed and refuse to see what God is doing in the world today? As God allows more and more of the future to become past



the answers to these questions may come.

But we have not yet answered this question: Where do we go from here and how do we get to where we are going? Dire predictions have been clouding the future of the Church anyway. What is the charismatic movement going to do to things? Our questions must be asked twice: once by each Christian to himself and once by the Church to herself.

I (as an individual Christian) have not received Spirit-baptism. It is with this wall, blocking a more complete and a more genuine understanding, that I have written this paper. Now that it is over, I must do some soul-searching. Does God's Word convince me that Spirit-baptism is something to be desired? Should it be something that I resist? Were I Spirit-baptized, would I be a greater blessing to the people I will serve in my parish ministry which is soon to begin? Perhaps I, having resolved these things in my mind, will seek Spirit-baptism. Perhaps not. Perhaps someone else, having gone through the same process, will seek Spirit-baptism. Perhaps not.

The Church will have to go through a similar process. She must be willing to ask herself the question of whether or not she has been resisting the Holy Spirit. She must be willing to allow God's Word to speak to what is happening today. She must be willing to pray that God would lead her to the correct answers. She must be willing to expect God to act in the way in which He will. Having done all that, perhaps the Church will say, "We have been wrong for a long, long time about You, Holy Spirit! God, forgive us!" Perhaps the reaction will be much more mild than that.

The least that can be expected of anyone, individual or Church, is

that he be praying, fervently, expectingly, demanding of God that He answer this prayer:

Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord! Be all Thy graces now outpoured  
On each believer's mind and heart; Thy fervent love to them impart.  
Lord, by the brightness of Thy light, Thou in the faith dost men  
unite  
Of ev'ry land and ev'ry tongue; This to Thy praise, O Lord, our  
God be sung.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah.

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