

1-1-1971

## Secularization Theology, Charismatic Renewal, and Luther's Theology of the Cross

Theodore Jungkuntz  
*Valparaiso University, Valparaiso*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm>



Part of the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Jungkuntz, Theodore (1971) "Secularization Theology, Charismatic Renewal, and Luther's Theology of the Cross," *Concordia Theological Monthly*: Vol. 42, Article 2.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol42/iss1/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact [seitzw@csl.edu](mailto:seitzw@csl.edu).

# Secularization Theology, Charismatic Renewal, and Luther's Theology of the Cross<sup>1</sup>

THEODORE JUNGKUNTZ

*The author is associate professor of theology at Valparaiso University, currently director of its Study Center in Reutlingen, West Germany.*

THE AUTHOR CONSTRUCTS A THEOLOGY OF CHARISMATIC RENEWAL WITH REFERENCE to the Lutheran confessional writings and to Luther's theology of the cross.

Secularization theology and charismatic renewal are phenomena which appear to stand at opposite ends of the theological

spectrum. Yet both have been criticized for doing violence to Luther's theology of the cross.<sup>2</sup> Secularization theology, however, claims to reflect a theology of the cross, whereas charismatic renewal, by its concentration on Jesus' words, "You shall receive power,"<sup>3</sup> appears to ogle after a theology of glory.<sup>4</sup> This study will at-

<sup>1</sup> "Secularization theology" is a many-faceted phenomenon with an immense literature, but the main impetus for it is generally conceded to have come from Dietrich Bonhoeffer. A brief but reliable review of Bonhoeffer's thought is found in Otto W. Heick, "Reflections on Bonhoeffer's Theology," *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, XL (1969), 203—17. Literature on "charismatic renewal" is also extensive. Bibliographical references can be found in the journal *Charisma Digest*, published biannually by the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI). See also Victor Bartling, "Notes on 'Spirit-Baptism' and 'Prophetic Utterance,'" *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, XXXIX (1968), 708—14, and Walter J. Bartling, "The Congregation of Christ—A Charismatic Body," *ibid.*, XL (1969), 67 to 80. Several scholars have investigated Luther's "theology of the cross." See Walther von Loewenich, *Luthers Theologia Crucis*, 5th ed. (Witten: Luther-Verlag, 1967); Hermann Sasse, "Theologia Crucis," *Briefe an lutherische Pastoren*, No. 18 (April 15, 1951); Regin Prenter, "Luther's Theology of the Cross," *Lutheran World*, VI (December 1959); Paul Althaus, "The Theology of the Cross," *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 25—42; and Heino O. Kadai, "Luther's Theology of the Cross," *Accents in Luther's Theology*, ed. Heino O. Kadai (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967), 230 to 272.

<sup>2</sup> Insofar as Bultmann and Ebeling are related to a cross-denying secularization theology, the book review article by Gerhard O. Forde, "Theology and Proclamation: Dialogue with Bultmann," *Dialog*, VI (1967), 299—302, is extremely important. As for charismatic renewal, at least to the extent that it manifests itself in "speaking in tongues," the editors of *Dialog* (II [1963], 152) designate it "a virtual denial of incarnational theology," which in effect means a denial of Luther's *theologia crucis*.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 1:8; 4:33; Lk. 24:49; compare Paul's typical conjunction of cross and power in Phil. 3:10.

<sup>4</sup> It is interesting that Regin Prenter discovers in Luther's theology of the cross the bond which links Bonhoeffer and Luther; see his "Bonhoeffer and the Young Luther," *World Come of Age*, ed. R. Gregor Smith (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 161—81. Gerhard Ebeling, "Non-religious Interpretation of Biblical Concepts," *Word and Faith*, trans. James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), p. 158, writes: ". . . the *theologia crucis* is seen to be the keynote of Bonhoeffer's thinking." See also Heick, pp. 207 and 212.

## CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

tempt to establish the compatibility between charismatic renewal that is Biblically and evangelically regulated and Luther's theology of the cross. It will also subject both secularization theology and charismatic renewal to critique in the light of an understanding and application of Luther's *theologia crucis*.

Since Luther's theology of the cross has been variously interpreted, it is necessary to indicate the understanding of it that will be used as a criterion for evaluating secularization theology and charismatic renewal in this essay.

A theology of the cross can be characterized as a theology that is

1. dependent on the revealed, promissory Word of God, anchored in the historical Christ;
2. apprehended by faith (that is, it stresses pure receptivity), which is Spirit-worked through the Christ-event in Word and sacraments;
3. given visible expression through love (*agape*) and obedient suffering which result from faith-full participation in Christ.

A theology of glory can be characterized as a theology that is

1. dependent on autonomous human reason;
2. apprehended by sight (that is, directly through human sense organs);
3. given visible expression through ego-centric works and rebellious activity that result from a law-oriented existence.

We shall observe how secularization theology and charismatic renewal relate to each of the following subjects from the perspective of Luther's theology of the

cross: Christology, prayer, Spirit-baptism (or religious experience), and charismatic gifts. These areas represent the point at which charismatic renewal is most commonly charged with having betrayed Lutheran theology.

## CHRISTOLOGY

Secularization theology since Bonhoeffer has generally adopted an extremely kenoticist Christology.<sup>5</sup> The dominant motif is Christ as "the man for others." However, some theologians claim that this Biblical motif is legitimate only when a Servant-Christology is dialectically developed with a Lordship-Christology.<sup>6</sup> For Luther the incarnation is already manifestation of the theology of the cross.<sup>7</sup> He would never allow the absorption of classical Christology into the kenotic soteriology proposed

<sup>5</sup> A helpful introduction to secularization theology is given by Robert L. Richard, *Secularization Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967). Richard refers to the "kenoticist Christology" of Bonhoeffer's "man for others" (pp. 122—23) and identifies this with the Biblical "Suffering Servant" motif. (Pp. 176—87)

<sup>6</sup> See Carl E. Braaten, "The Lordship of Christ in Modern Theology," *Dialog*, IV (1965), 262—63. Braaten also says that many are too quick to write off a pantocratic Christ to a *theologia gloriae* (p. 261, n. 9). Heick agrees that Bonhoeffer never surrendered his basic Chalcedonian Christology (pp. 205, 210—11). Richard scores the secular theologians for failing to integrate Nicean and Chalcedonian Christology with that of "the man for others" (pp. 169 to 75). He writes, "To think and talk of Christ as 'consubstantial to the Father,' is not to name him or describe him at the level of function and experience, but to understand him and in a sense define him at the level of cause. It is to pass from thinking and talking about things as they impress themselves upon us to thinking and talking about things as they are in themselves — to pass, therefore, from what is relative to what is objective and absolute." (P. 172)

<sup>7</sup> Kadai, p. 240.

by many Lutheran scholars today,<sup>8</sup> an attempt which can be considered as

. . . a *theologia gloriae* of another sort—the negative *theologia gloriae* of the old mystics. By the abject renunciation of self even to the point of *resignatio ad infernum* one automatically participates in the will of God for the self. . . . The *resignatio* leads more or less automatically to participation in the divine. But this, too, is *theologia gloriae*.<sup>9</sup>

What happens to Christology among those associated with charismatic renewal? Variations occur, as we can see in two representative models of "classical Christology." The first model is supplied by Dale Moody, who writes concerning the incarnation:

Most commentaries focus attention on the Logos Christology and assume that the incarnation took place at birth. If this assumption is correct, for Paul previously placed the incarnation at birth rather than baptism (Gal. 4:4-6), then the descent of the Spirit is an anointment (cf. Is. 42:1; Acts 10:38). The dove's descent is a witness that Jesus is already the Son of God, not an incarnation. The argument for baptismal incarnation is based on silence. Colwell and Titus say John follows Paul's view of the Spirit, and it seems that he does not depart from Paul on the time of the incarnation.<sup>10</sup>

Moody's traditional orthodoxy is evident, yet when he speaks of "an anointment," he

<sup>8</sup> Althaus, pp. 193—98. An attempt to correct this tendency is made by Ernst Kinder, "Soteriological Motifs in the Early Creeds," *Lutheran World*, VIII (1961), 16—23.

<sup>9</sup> Forde, p. 302.

<sup>10</sup> Dale Moody, *Spirit of the Living God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), p. 152. Moody displays his sympathies for charismatic renewal on p. 207.

betrays an orthodoxy with a difference. He underscores it when he writes that Mark 3:28-30 "makes clear that the source of Jesus' supernatural power is the Holy Spirit."<sup>11</sup>

A second model of a classical Christology that leaves room for Jesus' baptism by the Spirit maintains that during His earthly stay Jesus never used the divine power that He possessed as God. He did not perform miracles by the occasional use of His rightful power, as the questions in Schwan's edition of Martin Luther's Small Catechism maintain (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1912; see also WA 54, 50), but rather by virtue of the fact that He had received the power of the Holy Spirit when He was baptized. This model suggests further that believers today receive the same Spirit and are supposed to be able to do the works that Jesus did and thus continue His ministry on earth in its fullness.

This Christological model seems to conflict with the Lutheran confessional writings,<sup>12</sup> for the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord states that while Jesus had godly majesty "immediately at his conception even in his mother's womb . . . he laid it aside, and as Dr. Luther explains it, he kept it hidden during the state of his humiliation and did not use it at all times, but only when he wanted to."<sup>13</sup> But, as Edmund Schlink has pointed out, the Formula of Concord also says that the human nature of Jesus Christ "was not placed in complete *possession* of the di-

<sup>11</sup> Moody, p. 39.

<sup>12</sup> *The Book of Concord*, ed. Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 597 (FC, SD VIII, 30).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 596 (FC, SD VIII, 26).

## CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

vine nature until after the resurrection and ascension" (Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, VIII, 26 [Tappert translates the German *Possess* (Latin: *possessionem*) with "complete exercise." Ed. note]).<sup>14</sup> Thus while the statement that Jesus *never* used His rightful divine power during the time of His humiliation runs contrary to the Lutheran Confessions, these writings do not rule out the possibility that the baptism by the Spirit was a major source of His power. They do not deal with the Biblical accounts of Jesus' baptism, except in LC Baptism 21, nor do they draw any doctrinal conclusions from them concerning the source of Jesus' divine power. The Formula of Concord says concerning Jesus' baptism:

But we believe, teach, and confess that God the Father gave His Spirit to Christ, His beloved Son, according to the assumed human nature (whence He is called Messiah, or the Anointed) in such a way that He received the Spirit's gifts not by measure, like other saints . . . since Christ according to the Godhead is the second person in the holy Trinity and the Holy Spirit proceeds from Him as well as from the Father (and therefore He is and remains to all eternity His and the Father's own Spirit, who is never separated from the Son), it follows that through personal union the entire fullness of the Spirit (as

<sup>14</sup> Edmund Schlink, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions*, trans. Paul F. Koehnke and Herbert J. A. Bouman (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961), p. 191, and Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus — God and Man*, trans. Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), p. 308, do not distinguish between "divine majesty" and "prerogatives and privileges," thus ascribing "dissonances" to the Formula, whereas one should speak only of ambiguities. See *The Book of Concord*, p. 439 (LC, IV, 21).

the ancient Fathers say) is communicated to Christ according to the flesh that is personally united with the Son of God. This fullness demonstrates and manifests itself spontaneously and with all power in, with, and through the human nature.<sup>15</sup>

In summary, the Christological expressions of charismatic renewal or secularization theology are in danger of denying Luther's theology of the cross only if they call the intention of classical incarnational theology into question.<sup>16</sup> However, neither denies the theology of the cross simply by asserting Jesus' power to perform miracles,

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 605—6. (FC, SD VIII, 72-74). See also p. 595—96 (FC, SD VIII, 24-25): "On this basis [personal union and communion of the natures] Christ performed all his miracles and manifested his divine majesty according to his good pleasure, when and how he wanted to."

<sup>16</sup> "Theology of hope" as developed by Jürgen Moltmann in his book by that title (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), while it underscores the notion of "expectancy," which is vital to charismatic renewal, nevertheless tends to pervert Luther's theology of the cross. It attempts to hold upright the absolute temporal separation between Christ's cross, which is present for us now, and Christ's resurrection, which can only be present for us in the future. Thus the cross is participated in by faith, but the resurrection is participated in only by "new obedience, which unfolds itself in the realm of the hope of the resurrection" (pp. 160—61). Moltmann seems to rob the church of the sacramental presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper: "The congregation at the Table is not in possession of the sacral presence of the Absolute, but is a waiting, expectant congregation seeking communion with the coming Lord" (p. 326). Any sacramental presence of a risen Christ is for him "*eschatologia gloriae*" (p. 159). Moltmann does not mention Luther in this connection, but he borrows terminology from Luther and should have made it explicit that he considers Luther's theology a theology of glory. Luther, of course, would suspect Moltmann's "new obedience" (rather than "word-faith") theology of expressing a theology of glory.

whether the source of that power is traced to the "personal union of the two natures" or to "Spirit-baptism." These two events ought to be distinguished but never separated. The miracles performed under such a circumstance express a theology of the cross.<sup>17</sup>

#### PRAYER

Prayer is not very popular for many secularization theologians, as the following *Newsweek* report attests:

. . . when *Newsweek* reporters asked a wide variety of theologians to express their own prayer habits, most demurred. "I don't tell you about my bedroom secrets," snapped Prof. H. G. Geyer, a prominent young Protestant theologian at the University of Bonn. "Why should I tell you

<sup>17</sup> That Christian miracles are expressive of a theology of the cross is implicitly confirmed by the conclusions of C. F. D. Moule, *Miracles* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1965), pp. 16—17: "If we have reason to believe that the character of God is best seen in Jesus, and that the consistency of sheer moral perfection is the ultimate consistency, then we may have to revise our ideas of what is and is not 'possible.' And if we have reason to find in Jesus a unique degree of unity with the will of God, what is to prevent our believing that, where God is perfectly obeyed, there the mechanics of the material world look different from what they do in a situation dislocated by disobedience? It is not that regularities and consistencies are suspended or overridden; it is rather that our idea of how things work is based on too narrow a set of data. If the ultimate locus of consistency is in the realm of the personal — in the character of a God who 'cannot deny himself' — then what is (in our present conditions) unusual need not be ultimately an intervention or an irruption or a dislocation or suspension of natural law: it need only be what 'normally' happens — indeed what is bound to happen — on the rare and 'abnormal' occasions when a right relationship is achieved in the family of God." — Here Moule includes in "perfect obedience" what we have called "faith in a promissory word of God" and "obedient suffering."

about my secrets with God?" Said Catholic philosopher Leslie Dewart: "Theology is the prayer of intellectuals. Thinking about the ultimate meaning of any situation is what I call prayer." Dr. Langdon Gilkey of the University of Chicago Divinity School pointed out a dilemma: "I suspect most contemporary theologians would be embarrassed to admit they do not pray. And the others would be embarrassed to admit that they do." . . . The recent, abbreviated death-of-God movement sent chills of recognition through many a young theological student, and Billy Graham's rejoinder — "God's not dead, I just talked with Him this morning" — further alienated them by its assumed chumminess. God may be alive, but to many searching souls He is not receiving callers. "I can't get on my knees and say, 'Dear God,'" admits Rabbi Richard Rubenstein, associate professor of religion at the University of Pittsburgh. "I don't believe God is a 'Thou' whom I can speak to personally. I can believe in union with the divine, like a wave rejoining the ocean, but I can't see addressing a deity."<sup>18</sup>

This stands in stark contrast to Regin Preter's assertion: "The evangelical doctrine of prayer is a part of our Lutheran church's *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae* — the article on which the church stands or falls — the teaching of justification by faith alone."<sup>19</sup> Walther von Loe-

<sup>18</sup> *Newsweek* (Dec. 30, 1968), pp. 38—39.

<sup>19</sup> Regin Preter, *The Word and the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965), p. 113. Rudolf Hermann was one of the first to note and document the inseparable correlation between justification by faith and prayer in Luther's theology. See his essay "Das Verhältnis von Rechtfertigung und Gebet nach Luthers Auslegung von Römerbriefvorlesung," *Gesammelte Studien zur Theologie Luthers und der Reformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), pp. 11—43. Werner Elert, *The*

wenich includes an extensive discussion of the relationship between prayer and a theology of the cross, particularly intercessory prayer and the certainty of its being heard, which could conceivably reflect a theology of glory.<sup>20</sup> But Luther and prayer are patently as inseparable as Luther and justification by faith or Luther and his theology of the cross.<sup>21</sup>

How, on the other hand, does a theology of charismatic renewal relate to prayer? Edward O'Conner of the University of Notre Dame writes:

. . . their [the "charismatics"] prayer life is deepened and enlivened. They no longer find prayer simply a burden; they are drawn to it and feel the need of it. They spend a long time at it, often just remaining in silent adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, needing no books or other help. One college girl declares, "I used to feel good after I prayed, the way you do when you have done what you should. But now I feel good *while* I pray."

The mood of their prayer has also been affected. They are inclined spontaneously to praise God, something which many of them had never done before. It is a familiar fact that the average Christian, even if he is fairly devout, usually spends most of his prayer asking for things he needs. In exceptional moments, perhaps, he thanks God for favors received. But simply to

---

*Christian Ethos*, trans. Carl J. Schindler (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), p. 311, also speaks of the "soteriological character of every prayer."

<sup>20</sup> Von Loewenich, pp. 164—68.

<sup>21</sup> Regarding Luther's theology of prayer see Ingetraut Ludolphy, "Luther als Beter," and Bruno Jordahn, "Luther und das gottesdienstliche Gebet," *Luther: Zeitschrift der Luther-Gesellschaft*, 33 (1962), 128—41 and 116—27 respectively, and Vilmos Vajta, *Luther on Worship*, trans. U. S. Leupold (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958), pp. 161—66.

praise God because of His glory, and to do so by a spontaneous and joyous inclination, is ordinarily the mark of someone well advanced in the life of prayer. In the Pentecostal movement, the exclamation "praise God" is so common it is almost a trademark.<sup>22</sup>

Father O'Conner correctly emphasizes eucharistic prayer as characteristic of charismatics. Yet petitionary prayer is just as characteristic, though contemporary man finds it more of a problem.<sup>23</sup>

An Episcopalian charismatic, Emily Gardiner Neal, says this about intercessory prayer, especially in reference to healing:

It is entirely true that God knows our need before we express it. "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." "Before they call, I will answer" (Matt. 6:8, Is. 65:24). We pray not to instruct or inform God, but as an act of faith that we may know better what he requires of us. We pray, not in order to alter *His* will, but to bring *ourselves* into accord with it. We pray not necessarily to bring things to pass, but rather to bring the things of the Kingdom into our cognizance. . . .

When we first begin to pray, most of us do so with the intent of "using" God for our own ends. . . . But as through our prayer efforts we grow closer to Him . . . we strive perhaps for the first time to actively continue in His love. It is then that our prayers change, and we begin to pray that *He* use *us* to His glory and not to our convenience.

. . . the strongly affirmative prayer for

---

<sup>22</sup> Edward O'Conner, "A Catholic Pentecostal Movement," *Charisma Digest*, 1 (1968), 5—6.

<sup>23</sup> C. S. Lewis, "Petitionary Prayer: A Problem Without an Answer," *Christian Reflections* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1967), p. 142.

healing requires for many an entirely new approach to prayer. We have been so long accustomed to stating our need and then sanctimoniously quavering: "If it be Thy will," that to positively declare: "In the Name of Jesus, claim your healing," smacks to some of irreverency; while to assert boldly: "In His Name be thou whole," seems to others outright blasphemy.

Yet the truth is that Jesus in His earthly ministry gave us the pattern for healing prayer—a pattern followed by the apostles and practiced ever since by His healing disciples. To insert an equivocal phrase indicates in most cases not so much a commendable acquiescence to God's will as a lamentable lack of faith; not so much submission to His Authority, as lack of trust.<sup>24</sup>

C. S. Lewis once indicated that he had a problem—whether to pray according to

<sup>24</sup> Emily Gardiner Neal, *The Lord Is Our Healer* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1961), pp. 111—15. A Swiss Reformed "charismatic" theologian, Bernard Martin, seems to concur with Neal in *Healing for You* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1965), pp. 165—70. A German Lutheran "charismatic" theologian, Adolf Köberle, cites Bernard Martin with approval in his essay "Die Frage der Glaubensheilungen in der Gegenwart," *Heilung und Hilfe* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), pp. 128—29. And in his contribution to *The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church*, ed. J. Bodensieck (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965), he writes under the subject "Faith Healing": ". . . we must admit by and large that present day Christianity has neglected the biblical promises far too much. Average piety is all too ready to give way to pious resignation. One submits to that which cannot be changed, in a mood of fatalistic defeatism, whereas the early Christians faced sickness and death in a spirit of trusting resistance and aggressive counterattack." Luther's letter to Ernest Schulze, WA (Weimarer Ausgabe, the critical edition of Martin Luther's works) Br[ief] XI, 112, is also of interest (see appendix for text). See Elert, p. 308.

an "A Pattern" ("Thy will be done") or a "B Pattern" ("unwavering, unhesitating faith"). He said: "I come to you, reverend Fathers, for guidance. How am I to pray this very night?"<sup>25</sup> Neal's implicit theology of the cross coalesces the two patterns of C. S. Lewis into one. God's "will" is "unwavering, unhesitating faith" in His desire to heal through the believer's participation in the cross (and resurrection) of Christ.

Furthermore, Neal's description does not conflict with Paul Tillich's analysis of intercessory prayer, particularly in reference to health, despite its different terminology. Tillich writes:

Since prayers and intercessions for health belong to the normal intercourse between man and God, it is difficult to draw a sharp boundary line between Spirit-determined and magical praying. Generally speaking, one can say that a Spirit-determined prayer seeks to bring one's own personal center, including one's concern for the health of one's self or of someone else, before God, and that it is willing to accept the divine acceptance of the prayer whether its overt content is fulfilled or not.<sup>26</sup> Conversely a prayer which is only a magical concentration on the desired aim, using God for its realization, does not accept an unfulfilled prayer as an accepted prayer, for the ultimate aim in the magic prayer is not God and the reunion with Him but the object of the prayer, for example, health. A prayer for health in faith is not an attempt at faith healing but an expression of the state of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence. . . .

Healing is fragmentary in all its forms.

<sup>25</sup> Lewis, pp. 143—44, 147, 151.

<sup>26</sup> See Neal's discussion of "redemptive suffering," pp. 73—75.



## CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

. . . Not even the healing power of the Spirit can change this situation. Under the condition of existence it remains fragmentary and stands under the "in spite of" of which the Cross of Christ is the symbol.<sup>27</sup>

Tillich understands intercessory prayer, particularly in reference to healing, within the context of a theology of the cross. Similarly, Neal rejects every notion of an eschatology of glory:

The healing ministry, as is the entire Faith, is filled with paradoxes—and the final great paradox seems to me this: To pray for Christ's healing here and now—and yet to know that "if in this life only, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:19).

To pray for the preservation of physical life—and yet to know that death is the gateway to everlasting life; and He "shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death" (Phil. 1:20).

To strive to be made whole through Christ—and yet to know that complete wholeness on this earth must always elude our grasp.

To fight sickness in His name—and yet to accept death if it comes, in the certain knowledge that it is not death to die, for "to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21).

Comprehension of this paradox comes by grace, as by grace comes our willing acceptance. This is the ultimate benediction bestowed upon us by a merciful God.<sup>28</sup>

Ordinarily the term "faith healing" arouses suspicions for Lutherans on the ground that it represents a concealed form of a theology of glory. *Time* magazine's

report about the faith healer Asa Alonso Allen warrants such suspicions:

Allen's specialty, along with cures, is the \$100 pledge, and the hard sell is usually made by one of his assistants. "The Scriptures say you got to vow and pay, vow and pay, vow and pay. . . . You got to promise God, and you got to keep the promise. If you want him to lift your pain, to make you whole, to bring you joy, you got to have faith. Faith. And faith is to vow and pay."<sup>29</sup>

Such faith and prayer (a perverted form of Lewis' "B Pattern") indeed do violence to Luther's theology of the cross. However, not every bold prayer need be a denial of Luther's theology of the cross.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Time* (March 7, 1969), pp. 64, 67.

<sup>30</sup> A helpful, Lutheran-oriented discussion of faith healing was provided a decade ago by Edward J. Mahnke, "Faith Healing: A Discussion," *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, XXX (1959), 260—70. Mahnke writes: ". . . the pastor makes no unconditional promise of health in the sense of removal of pain or illness" (p. 266). Von Loewenich writes: "God discloses himself precisely also in the answer to our prayer as *Deus absconditus*; therefore we are not permitted to limit his help by determining its measure or goal. . . . 'Cum conditione' it is permitted to ask God for help at a particular time . . ." (p. 166). But Ludolphy discovers even more "charismatic boldness" in Luther: "When Luther was convinced that his petitions were in harmony with God's purposes, he dared to push God for an answer in an unbelievably bold fashion. He was convinced that the task of the Reformation was God's task. For its implementation he considered Philip Melancthon, who complemented him in many respects, as indispensable. When Melancthon, exhausted and broken as a result of the tensions and anxieties surrounding the bigamy of Landgrave Philip of Hesse, lay deathly sick at Weimar in June of 1540, Luther snatched him out of death's arms. So we must understand these defiant-appearing words of this otherwise humble man: 'In this instance our Lord God had to pay me; for I threw the bag of concerns before his door and I dinned his ears with all of his prom-

<sup>27</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 279—80, 282.

<sup>28</sup> Neal, p. 209. See n. 16 above.

The contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal might serve as a Biblical example of such a prayer of daring faith—a faith which itself is a charismatic gift according to 1 Cor. 13:2.<sup>31</sup>

ises as to how he desired to favorably hear our prayer—promises which I well knew how to document in Scripture. I put it to him that he had to grant my request if he expected me to continue to trust his promises'” (p. 130). (Translation of von Loewenich and Ludolphy by the author.) Ludolphy cites her source as “Die handschriftliche Geschichte Ratzbergers über Luther und seine Zeit, hrsg. von Chr. Gotth. Neudecker (Jena 1850) S. 103. Vgl. auch CR 3, 1060 f.”

An important contribution to the literature on the church's healing ministry is the report by Thomas A. Droege, “That Thy Saving Health May Be Known,” *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, OCCASIONAL PAPERS No. 2* (May 1968), 5—37. The report refers explicitly to Luther's theology of the cross (pp. 13—14) and to the necessity for exercising a healing ministry relevant to the situation and culture in which it finds itself (pp. 22, 28—29). There is, however, no extended discussion of prayer as a means to health.

<sup>31</sup> The Elijah pericope has triggered a lively debate on the question of the experimental approach to the efficacy of prayer. Cf. Peter Baelz, *Prayer and Providence* (New York: Seabury Press, 1968), pp. 31—33. He writes: “There is plenty of room for reverent agnosticism in our presenting our petitions before the throne of heaven, but there may come a point where agnosticism ceases to be reverent and an approach to heaven is conscientiously [sic] abandoned in favour of an unbelieving regulation of one's own affairs. If we are to have some good reason for trusting God, then we must have reason to believe that God is trustworthy. We must be prepared to give an answer to the question why we go on trusting God in circumstances in which such trust appears to the impartial observer to be misplaced. Our reasons will no doubt be highly complex; but we may surely expect that there will be something in our experience which ‘verifies’ our faith in his grace and favor” (p. 33). See Kadai, p. 247: “Luther was convinced that to know God was to believe that he was good even if His goodness escaped man's sense experience.” But Kadai

It is not only charismatic renewal that has preserved a vital understanding of prayer in terms of Luther's theology of the cross. Some secular theologians presuppose as much as Luther the living God of the Bible and the resurrected, reigning Lord Jesus Christ. A strong case can be made for such an interpretation of Bonhoeffer's theology, even though disputed.<sup>32</sup> In the case of prayer as well, Luther's theology of the cross can effect a reconciliation between extreme, or perverted, forms of secularization theology and charismatic renewal when it lays bare and applies the Biblical revelation. It thus corrects possible distortions in both without losing their valid insights.

#### SPIRIT-BAPTISM (or Religious Experience)

The title given here in parentheses perhaps indicates the problem a Lutheran has in speaking of Spirit-baptism. Victor Bartling, though he “will not quibble about the term,” specifies the difficulty:

. . . when in the modern Pentecostal movement, speaking in tongues is regarded

adds in a footnote to this assertion, p. 269, n. 74: “Luther comments that it is a practical impossibility that a Christian would never experience God's goodness. See LW 21, 310.”

<sup>32</sup> For Bonhoeffer's own thoughts on prayer during the days of imprisonment that led to his death see his *Letters and Papers From Prison* (London: Collins, 1953), pp. 41—42, 49, 65 to 67, 92, 98, 128—32, 142, 167—71, 182. Heick, p. 216, reports how Heinrich Ott interprets Bonhoeffer in the direction of holding to a personal God as a presupposition for his prayer life. See also Kenneth Hamilton, *Life in One's Stride* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1968), pp. 72, 77, 86—88. On the other hand Ronald Gregor Smith, *Secular Christianity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), in an epilog entitled “Prayer” (pp. 205—9), appears to reduce prayer to the “being of the believer,” to “union” with “God,” rather than dialogical communion with God.

## CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

not merely as a sign of possessing the Spirit but is elevated to *the* sign; or when nonpossessors of this gift are regarded as deficient in Spirit endowment; or when many of these charismatics set their Spirit-Baptism in opposition to "water-Baptism" — applying this term to the Christian sacrament, which is often regarded by them as "water only" — then we must protest most vigorously.<sup>33</sup>

The difficulty, in other words, is not with Spirit-baptism understood as the reception of charismatic gifts, since the apostle Paul "is not in principle a rationalistic debunker of unusual spiritual phenomena,"<sup>34</sup> but with the role assigned to tongue-speaking and the relationship between "water and the Spirit." That Lutherans are sensitive at these points reflects not self-serving concern for maintaining an historic denominational identity and image but a concern for the integrity of the Gospel whereby the church lives. And this Gospel is confessed by Lutherans in the shape of a theology of the cross. As a result, Lutherans must ask how they can speak of Spirit-baptism with the same fullness as the Scriptures (*sola Scriptura*, the "formal principle" of the Reformation) without denying the theology of the cross (*sola fide*, the "material principle" of the Reformation).

Before attempting an answer to this question it would be helpful to cite some definitions of Spirit-baptism given by classical Pentecostals and to distinguish these from definitions operative among neo-Pentecostals.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Victor Bartling, p. 709.

<sup>34</sup> Walter J. Bartling, p. 71.

<sup>35</sup> The distinction between classical Pentecostalism and neo-Pentecostalism is widely used. See Anthony A. Hoekema, *What About*

The following definition is given by a classical Pentecostal in a tract assembled primarily for the benefit of Lutherans:

This is how the Bible explains the Baptism of the Holy Spirit: It is an experience that changed the lives of the early believers and will do the same for those who accept it today. For it is the promise of the Father to us as well as those of the apostolic era (Luke 11:13; Acts 2:38, 39) . . . .

*The scriptural evidence of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues.* When that miracle took place on their fire-touched lips they knew beyond any shadow of doubt that the long-expected Spirit had come — and so did everybody else within ear-shot. It was this sudden supernatural experience that proved the fulfillment of the promise.<sup>36</sup>

Anthony A. Hoekema in his critical study of Pentecostalism describes the classical position as follows:

There are differences of opinion among Pentecostals on the question of whether "entire sanctification" is necessary before one may receive the baptism of the Spirit which is accompanied by glossolalia. . . . By "baptism of the Spirit," "baptism in the Spirit," "baptism with the Spirit," or "Spirit-baptism" (the terms will be used interchangeably) is meant the instantaneous experience in which a person, usually

---

*Tongue-Speaking* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1966), p. 31. "Classical Pentecostalism" is the designation given to the modern Pentecostal revival occurring near the turn of this century with its emphasis on tongue-speaking as the initial manifestation of Spirit-baptism, whereas "neo-Pentecostalism" refers to the spread of glossolalia to the established churches during the 1960s without rigid dogmatism as to the role of this particular charisma.

<sup>36</sup> Jerry Jensen, ed., *Lutherans and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Los Angeles: Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International, 1966), p. 4.

already a believer, is completely filled by the Holy Spirit, and thus, receives full power for Christian service. All Pentecostal churches teach that believers should seek such a Spirit-baptism.

. . . Though a minority of Pentecostals would grant the possibility of Spirit-baptism without glossolalia, the majority would view a Spirit-baptism as incomplete or inconclusive without glossolalia.<sup>37</sup>

On the other hand, representing Roman Catholic neo-Pentecostalism, is Dr. Josephine Massingberd Ford, associate professor of theology at Notre Dame University. In an interview recorded in *Jubilee* she says:

. . . there are the non-Catholic [non-Roman Catholic] Christians who have entered into the baptism of the Spirit, (i.e., being prayed over that the grace of Baptism and Confirmation may be stirred up afresh), for example, some of the Lutherans. . . . I should like to stress that the seven sacraments are the source of the

<sup>37</sup> Hoekema, pp. 35, 37. His "sympathetic" critique of the classical Pentecostal position is often compelling (see pp. 58—81).—It is interesting to note, however, that a favorite expression of classical Pentecostals in reference to obtaining Spirit-baptism, namely, "to break through," is also used by Luther in reference to intercessory prayer as practiced by a congregation. See Ludolph, p. 132: "Luther had experienced what it meant to be borne by the congregation. ' . . . in the midst of the assembled congregation' prayer is 'more from the heart and also breaks through ('dringet auch durch')'" (WA, Ti[schreden] III, 3605, translation by author). See also Hoekema, p. 58, and David J. DuPlessis, *The Spirit Bade Me Go* (Oakland: David J. DuPlessis, 1963), pp. 69—79, who is unwilling to use the terms "interchangeably" as Hoekema employs them. See also Michael Harper, *As at the Beginning: The Twentieth Century Pentecostal Revival* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1965), pp. 97—104.

gifts of the Spirit but this laying on of hands seems to release these powers very efficaciously. I cannot say why. . . . St. Paul tells us that it [speaking in tongues] is the least of the gifts so it is certainly not indispensable.<sup>38</sup>

Still another Roman Catholic neo-Pentecostal, Kevin Ranaghan of St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana, writes:

It is neither a rite nor a sacrament; it's simply Jesus keeping his promise to pray the Father to pour out His Holy Spirit on those who believe. . . . The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an occasion, or a moment, of explicit and radical faith. . . . It's a moment of faith in which the individual says, "Jesus has promised this [the gifts of the Spirit] to the whole church, to all the members of His body, and that includes me. This is meant to be a norm of the Christian life and is to be believed and accepted in faith."<sup>39</sup>

The following excerpts are taken from a study of speaking in tongues by Laurence Christenson, a pastor in The American Lutheran Church:

Beyond conversion, beyond the assurance of salvation, beyond having the Holy Spirit there is a baptism with the Holy Spirit. . . .

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. . . . one thing is constant in the Scripture, and it is most important: It is never merely *assumed* that a person has been baptized with the Holy Spirit. When he

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *Jubilee* (June 1968), pp. 13, 17.

<sup>39</sup> Kevin Ranaghan, "The Essential Element in the Church," *Charisma Digest*, 2 (1969), 18. See also Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan, *Catholic Pentecostals* (Paramus: Paulist Press Deus Books, 1969).

has been baptized with the Holy Spirit the person *knows* it. *It is a definite experience.*<sup>40</sup>

God won't force this experience on anyone. But He is more than ready to give it to anyone who asks.<sup>41</sup>

There is a sound biblical theology for the baptism with the Holy Spirit. But the baptism with the Holy Spirit is not a theology to be discussed and analyzed: It is an experience one enters into.

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is a gift of God. God does not give worthless or no-account gifts.

. . . Water baptism became an integral part of the life of the Apostolic Church. . . . Through this rite or sacrament, the Holy Spirit grafts a new believer into the body of Christ, the Church. . . . This baptism has two distinguishing features: It is with water, and the one who administers the baptism is a person commissioned by the Lord to do so.

. . . Baptism with the Holy Spirit also has two distinguishing features: It is with the Holy Spirit, and the One who baptizes is Jesus himself.<sup>42</sup>

*The baptism with the Holy Spirit is thus an encounter with Jesus Christ, the mighty Baptizer with the Holy Spirit.*

The shift of emphasis from "seeking an experience" to "an encounter with Christ" has opened the door of blessing to unnumbered thousands of people.<sup>43</sup>

When a person feels that this experience [speaking in tongues] is not for him, that the Holy Spirit is working in his life in other ways, that is his decision, and

<sup>40</sup> Laurence Christenson, *Speaking In Tongues and Its Significance for the Church* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1968), pp. 37—38.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40—41.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

there should be no implication that he is "less of a Christian" than someone else who speaks in tongues. . . .

On the other hand, when a person feels that this blessing is something he needs in order to become a more effective Christian, then we pray that he may receive it. When the Lord has led him to that decision, we believe that he will become a better Christian — not better than someone else, but better than he himself was before.<sup>44</sup>

Is speaking in tongues the only valid objective manifestation that a person has had this definite, instantaneous experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit? Scripture does not say that it is the only one.<sup>45</sup>

The experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is a definite event, happening at a given moment in time.<sup>46</sup>

Jesus binds us to Himself by this chain of three links: repentance and faith, water baptism, and the baptism with the Holy Spirit. These three links form a perfect unity, and the believers' relationship with Christ is incomplete until all three links have been forged on the anvil of personal experience.<sup>47</sup>

We have quoted Christenson at length because he is a Lutheran and because he seems to raise a question not sufficiently specified in Victor Bartling's statement of the problem. Bartling suggests that the problem is the role assigned to tongue-speaking and the relationship between water-baptism and Spirit-baptism.<sup>48</sup> Christenson, however, neither makes tongue-speaking a requirement for salvation nor denies the sacramental nature of water

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 108—9.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 47—48.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>48</sup> See the text to notes 33 and 34 above.

baptism. The crucial question that remains, then, is whether Spirit-baptism as an instantaneous, experienceable event as *distinct from* (not "in opposition to") water-baptism is necessary. Christenson seems to answer with a qualified yes—necessary not for salvation,<sup>49</sup> but for a complete relationship with Christ.<sup>50</sup> This type of qualification seems similar to the formula emerging out of the 16th-century "Majoristic Controversy," namely, that good works are necessary, but not for salvation.<sup>51</sup>

How does all this appear in the light of Luther's theology of the cross? Al-

<sup>49</sup> Christenson, p. 94: "*Speaking in tongues is NOT a requirement for salvation.* Nowhere in Scripture is it suggested that any manifestation of the Holy Spirit is required for salvation (unless the 'new birth' be thought of as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit). The formula for salvation is simply, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.'"

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51. A recent contribution to the theology of baptism is Richard Jungkuntz's *The Gospel of Baptism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968). This book is helpful in focusing on the *Gospel* which Baptism *is* (as the title implies) and makes implicit reference to Luther's theology of the cross and explicit reference to the source for Luther's doctrine, the apostle Paul (see pp. 63—64, 105—7). The book nevertheless does not get at the question of Spirit-baptism as also distinct, even though not separate, from water-baptism. There are no references to the charismata which the New Testament so often relates to water-baptism and yet distinguishes from it. There is a reference to the imposition of hands (p. 130), but no exegetical treatment of the charismata frequently mentioned in connection with this rite. The book concentrates on those portions of Scripture which seem more directly to reflect "Gospel" and passes almost without notice the fullness of the Scripture immediately surrounding water-baptism and relating *it* to the Gospel.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. F. Bente, *Historical Introduction to the Book of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921, 1965), pp. 112—24.

though Luther could include in a sermon preached in 1522 on the Festival of the Ascension of our Lord a discussion of "the signs, moreover, which will follow after those who believe!" (Mark 16:17-20),<sup>52</sup> he, to my knowledge, did not use the expression Spirit-baptism in the sense commonly employed by those promoting charismatic renewal. This terminological omission, however, does not mean that a simple and immediate dismissal of the subject is possible, for Luther might penetrate the deepest significance of the subject matter intended by proponents of Spirit-baptism by means of a different terminology. It is for this reason that we have suggested "religious experience" as an alternate title to this section of our study since all the definitions describe Spirit-baptism as an "experience" (even though classical Pentecostals tend to distinguish more sharply between "faith experience" and "power experience").

Luther, in spite of his polemic against using "experience" as a measuring stick for faith,<sup>53</sup> nevertheless had a very positive evaluation of the place of experience in the life of the Christian.<sup>54</sup> For instance, he wrote:

No one can correctly understand God or His work unless he has received such un-

<sup>52</sup> WA 10/3, 144—47. This is referred to also by Christenson, pp. 94, 133, though without documentation. For a discussion of some of what Luther says about "charismatic gifts," see Althaus, pp. 429—45.

<sup>53</sup> See von Loewenich, pp. 86—99.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 104—13. Luther's position is described, for example, by von Loewenich, p. 109, as follows: "Der Glaube *ist* nicht Erfahrung, aber er *wird* erfahren." ("Of faith it ought not be said that it *is* experience but rather that it is *experienced.*") Luther refuses to make faith identical with experience (as many theologians

derstanding immediately from the Holy Spirit. But no one can receive it from the Holy Spirit without experiencing, proving, and feeling it.<sup>55</sup>

You yourself in your own conscience must feel Christ himself. You must experience unshakably that it is God's word even though the whole world should dispute it. As long as you do not have this feeling, you have certainly not yet tasted God's word.<sup>56</sup>

This same tension between a positive and a negative evaluation of the role of "experience" in the Christian life is found in *The Book of Concord*. Edmund Schlink cites as positive evaluations references to the experience of the wrath of God,<sup>57</sup> the experience of the gift of regeneration,<sup>58</sup> and the experience of new obedience,<sup>59</sup> but he underlines as negative evaluations the demand that justifying faith be manifested as a "feeling" or that there be the "experience" of the propitious God.<sup>60</sup> Yet

associated with the personality sciences describe it), not because he abstracts faith from experience but because for him the only valid faith-forming experience is the experience which results from the application of a specific promissory Word of God anchored in the historical Christ. For an excellent though disputed discussion see Althaus, pp. 55—63, 245—50, 446 to 58.

<sup>55</sup> WA 7, 546; LW 21, 299; see WA 10/3, 261.

<sup>56</sup> WA 10/2, 23; LW 36, 248; see Althaus, p. 61.

<sup>57</sup> See Schlink, p. 79, and Althaus, pp. 173 to 78; see also Tappert, p. 112 (Apol. IV, 37).

<sup>58</sup> Schlink, p. 108; see Tappert, pp. 124, 160 (Apol. IV, 125, 349).

<sup>59</sup> Schlink, p. 112, 117; see Tappert, pp. 148 (Apol. IV, 275-76), 433 (LC III, 93-98); Althaus, pp. 247—50.

<sup>60</sup> Schlink, p. 98, 128. See Tappert, pp. 129, 136—37 (Apol. IV, 163, 214 ff.), 557 (FC, SD IV, 37). One should distinguish between demanding or requiring an experience and ex-

Luther refers to a very empirical method of testing God when he writes in the Large Catechism: "I have tried it myself and learned by experience that often sudden, great calamity was averted and vanished in the very moment I called upon God."<sup>61</sup> Thus there can be no doubt that experience was assigned a very positive function in Luther's theology.<sup>62</sup> Did he thereby deny his own theology of the cross?

The answer of course is no, since Luther never regarded experience as the ultimate basis for faith.<sup>63</sup> For this he looked to God's words of promise alone, although since God does not lie he could expectantly await God's making good His promises.<sup>64</sup>

pecting an experience. Without experience we seem to be left with a docetic Christianity.

<sup>61</sup> Tappert, p. 374 (LC I, 72).

<sup>62</sup> An important discussion of Luther's understanding of experience is Regin Preter, *Spiritus Creator* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1953), pp. 55—64, 205—9. Preter distinguishes very carefully, perhaps to the point of separation, between psychological experience and that worked by the Holy Spirit in the school of inner conflict.

<sup>63</sup> To argue that faith (*fides qua*) is experience, whereas faith (*fides quae*) is not, is still to miss Luther's understanding of faith. For him neither *fides qua* nor *fides quae* is experience, although both can and will be *experienced*, and faith experienced in this sense is certainly dependent on psychological development.

<sup>64</sup> For example, Ludolph writes, pp. 131 to 32: "What was the source of Luther's certainty that his prayers would be heard? This can be seen from the example of his prayer for Melanchthon's life. He had 'dinned the ears' of God with those promises found in the Holy Scripture which relate to the answering of prayer. These promises of God served as a foundation of rock upon which Luther built." And further, p. 135: "No one can measure how powerful and strong prayer is and how much it can accomplish without himself having dared it and learned it from experience. It is 'a stupendous thing' that a person who is experiencing a tremendous problem closing in on him,

If Luther then speaks so positively of the experience following after faith, is it perhaps not possible that this experience can be related to what those associated with charismatic renewal have termed Spirit-baptism? And this without detriment to Luther's theology of the cross? Real differences between Luther and proponents of Spirit-baptism, that is, an experience of the Spirit making His presence felt *after* faith's reception of God's promises, would arise only when these "experiences" are routinized according to a pattern that is usually arrived at biblicistically. Speaking in tongues *may* be *an* experienced expression of the Spirit's presence; it need not be the *initial* expression nor even a *necessary* expression at *any* time, though it has its own definite value and as a gift of the Spirit ought not to be despised.<sup>65</sup> It is important only that the maturing Christian *does experience* the fruit and the gifts of the Spirit. The experience should be called "instantaneous" only if this word is very broadly defined.<sup>66</sup>

---

can seek his refuge in prayer. Luther had complete certainty: '. . . as often as I have earnestly prayed . . . I have been ever so abundantly answered and have gotten more than I prayed for! Surely God occasionally delayed his answer, but nevertheless, it did come.' (WA, Ti I, 886, translation by author)

<sup>65</sup> Phenomenologically tongue-speaking is ambiguous. It is like the earthly element in the sacraments until connected with God's promissory Word, and it is received in a theologically salutary fashion only by faith in this Word. But when it is thus a gift of the Spirit, it is to be accepted as such. See Walter J. Bartling, pp. 73, 78.

<sup>66</sup> Christenson's definition of "instantaneous" seems to be more concerned with the event-nature of the experience than with the pinpointing of a precise moment, although he does definitely mean both. He writes, pp. 47—48: "The baptism with the Holy Spirit is an experience

We turn again to secularization theology. Does it have a "secular" equivalent for Spirit-baptism?

Robert L. Richard has an interesting evaluation of Paul van Buren's understanding of the scope of human experience. He describes van Buren's position as follows:

We do not . . . have experience of "non-objective reality," or of "the transcendent," or of "the absolute," or of "the ground and end of all things." The most we can do is form ideas of such "things," and then attempt to indicate what we mean. But the attempt is doomed to failure, because there is no language on earth which can both convey the content of such ideas and still pass the test for meaningful utterance.<sup>67</sup>

Richard then offers this critique of van Buren's position:

Van Buren, however, seems to overlook something that is rather consistently reported of human experience. Modern scientific and secular man continues to talk every now and then of the moments in his experience when there is a blank after the *of*; experience of \_\_\_\_\_ He speaks, for example, of a "moment of awareness," a "moment of communication," a "moment of discernment" perhaps, or even a "moment of mystery." . . .

The experience being talked about, \_\_\_\_\_ which happens at a definite moment in time. . . . A person's experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit may be quiet and unspectacular — so quiet that he may wonder at the time if he actually *had* the experience. But if it is genuine, it will begin to show in his life." — I think that Christenson has generalized and absolutized the Biblical references to "instantaneous" Spirit-baptism beyond their scope. This need not be understood as a violation of Luther's theology of the cross so much as it is simply a misapplication of the Biblical text.

<sup>67</sup> Richard, pp. 109—10.



however obscurely, is the speaker's faint intuition of his own spiritual quality: the heightened awareness of consciousness, and the activation of subjectivity, that accompanies the more precious moments of understanding, decision and responsible personal commitment.<sup>68</sup>

Here, it would appear to me, we have a striking example of a secularized version of Spirit-baptism. The content is different but the form remains the same. It is a coming to awareness of one's own subjectivity.<sup>69</sup> Spirit-baptism is analogous to a psychological coming to awareness of one's own subjectivity, as for instance when a child becomes consciously and existentially aware of what it means for him as a son to have a father on whose love he can depend. Spirit-baptism can simply be described as the coming to awareness of one's subjectivity as a child of God, with the experiential knowledge that one can depend on the Father-son relationship sacramentally established through water-baptism. However, whereas Spirit-baptism as "experience" derives its content and meaning from a *promissory word of God* coming to a person from the outside, its secular version derives its content and meaning from other sources whether inside or outside a person.

Wayne Oates in his valuable study *The Holy Spirit in Five Worlds* has pointed

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pp. 110—11.

<sup>69</sup> Note how Althaus describes Luther's faith experience in terms of "awareness," pp. 60—61: "Luther uses a whole series of expressions to describe this element of experience in faith. The word [God's word] 'satisfies the heart,' 'convinces,' 'grasps' it, takes it 'captive'; the heart 'feels how true and right the word is'; it must 'know,' 'feel,' and 'taste' (*sapere*—Luther uses this ancient expression for 'direct awareness')."

out the striking formal similarity between the Christian experience of the Holy Spirit and the search for expansion of consciousness through psychedelic, hallucinogenic, and psychotomimetic drugs. He also documents contrasts between the two experiences.<sup>70</sup> Similarly he indicates how the contemporary interest in nonverbal forms of communication formally parallels the phenomenon of glossolalia among "the 'well-to-do,' the sophisticated, and superficially verbal."<sup>71</sup> Still another secular-religious expression of "coming to awareness" is found on the one hand among the hippies, following the *via contemplativa*, and on the other hand among the "New Left," following the *via activa* to a self-transcending ideal.<sup>72</sup>

Is there any hope for reconciliation between the coming to awareness by means of the Spirit-baptism of charismatic renewal or by means of secular methods? Can Luther's theology of the cross be of any service?

For Luther, religious experience, or coming to awareness, if it is to occur within a theology of the cross, must be an event *following* faith rather than establishing it. In this context Luther often referred to 2

<sup>70</sup> See Wayne E. Oates, *The Holy Spirit in Five Worlds: The Psychedelic, The Nonverbal, The Articulate, The New Morality, The Administrative* (New York: Association Press, 1968) pp. 15—38. See also the "Views and Counter-views" regarding religious experience and psychedelic experience by Timothy Leary and William Hordern in *Dialog*, III (1964), 215—22. Cf. n. 74 below.

<sup>71</sup> Oates, pp. 51—52, 54—56.

<sup>72</sup> See Delbert L. Earisman, *Hippies in Our Midst* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), pp. XIII f., 134. Awareness is spoken of as "finding your own thing."

Peter 1:10.<sup>73</sup> If charismatic renewal and secularization theology wish to be concerned with a coming to awareness within the bounds of a theology of the cross they must retain this pattern: *first* the reception of the "new self" as a pure gift from God through the promissory word of God and only *then* the stirring to awareness of that self by the Spirit's "works following."<sup>74</sup>

#### CHARISMATIC GIFTS

This final section will serve as a summary to our systematic approach rather than as an exegetical treatment.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> See Althaus, p. 246. It seems that the attempt to restate a theology of confirmation today would be facilitated if confirmation were seen in conjunction with the exhortation of 2 Peter 1:10 to "be the more zealous to *confirm* your call and election" and if this, in turn, were seen in conjunction with Mark 16:20, where "the Lord worked with them and *confirmed* the message by the signs that attended it." "Confirmation," Scripturally defined, is ultimately man's coming to awareness of the subjectivity granted him in his water-baptism. This occurs when a person is led to seek those things *promised* to the children of God. As he experiences the signs following after his faith in the promise he will truly be "confirmed" by God Himself, more so than by a ritual which fails existentially to call forth trust in a promise, the fulfillment of which can be experienced. "Sons" with such a "confirmed" awareness of their "Father" will witness with power and not as "grandsons" who know the Father not by personal experience (awareness) but only second-hand. See DuPlessis, pp. 61—68, for this analogy.

<sup>74</sup> Hordern, p. 222, argues with Leary in this way: "We have no reason to deny that men may find great illumination and help from LSD even though, in our Christian freedom, we choose to remain total abstainers. But we do doubt the adequacy of works to save a man, even when the works come from a test tube."

<sup>75</sup> Of the many adequate exegetical studies, see especially Arnold Bittlinger, *Gifts and Graces: A Commentary on 1 Corinthians 12-14*

Earlier we referred to a sermon by Luther in which he treated what today is frequently referred to as "charismatic gifts." This list in the spurious ending to the Gospel of Mark is not the "complete" list usually appealed to by classical Pentecostals. Ordinarily reference is made to the "nine gifts of the Spirit" as mentioned by St. Paul in 1 Cor. 12:7-10:

1. The utterance of wisdom
2. The utterance of knowledge
3. Faith
4. Gifts of healing
5. Working of miracles
6. Prophecy
7. The ability to distinguish between spirits
8. Various kinds of tongues
9. The interpretation of tongues<sup>76</sup>

Luther's sermon nevertheless gives us some insights into his evaluation of these so-called supernatural gifts as a whole.

So, wherever you find a Christian, there still is power to do such signs if there is need of them. However, no one should take it upon himself to do such signs if it is not necessary or circumstances do not require them. For the disciples also did not do them at all times but only to attest the Word of God and to confirm it through signs and wonders, just as this text says: ". . . confirming the word with signs following. They went abroad and preached everywhere and confirmed their

---

(Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1968) and the literature referred to in notes 33 to 40 above.

<sup>76</sup> See Harper, p. 104. Bittlinger, pp. 27 to 53, distinguishes exegetically between each gift, but he does not make the list a closed canon. Walter J. Bartling, p. 77, says: "Paul does not pretend to give an exhaustive listing, nor does he presume to dictate to the Spirit by his lists how He must channel His powers in the ever new and ever changing situations of the church."

## CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

word by signs following." Since, however, the Gospel has now been spread and made known throughout the world, it is not necessary to do signs as in apostolic times. If, however, necessity should require it and there were such as would desire to curtail and oppress the Gospel, then we would certainly have to respond and do signs rather than that we would permit the Gospel to be abused and suppressed. But I hope it will not be necessary and that it will not come to that. — At any rate, that I should here speak with new tongues is not at all necessary, since you all can grasp well what I'm saying and understand me. If God, however, should send me somewhere where I could not be understood, then he could very well grant me their tongue or language in order that I might be understood.<sup>77</sup>

It is clear that Luther did not restrict the possibility of extraordinary wonders to the apostolic age. It is also evident that he understood their function as confirming and validating the Gospel whenever the Gospel was restricted and despised. Finally, Luther evidently understood "tongues" in terms of foreign languages used for preaching, and not in terms of the phenomenon in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 where the uninterpreted tongue serves the purpose of building up the user. Nonetheless, the question remains whether the position taken by Luther in this sermon at all contradicts his theology of the cross.

Luther has no difficulty integrating the "power" of Pentecost with the "weakness" of Good Friday's cross. In fact, that is the key to his theology. The power of Pentecost is precisely the epiphany of the power inherent in the weakness of the cross.

<sup>77</sup> WA 10/3, 145—46 (translation by author).

When Jesus abandoned Himself completely, freely, lovingly to the will of His heavenly Father, He appeared weak to the eyes of men. In reality He was participating in the power of God, the power of God's suffering love. During Jesus' earthly ministry He manifested this "power" by touching in a selfless love, which drove *Him* to the cross, those who needed the physician's touch. The "wonderful exchange" took place — He suffered by touching; those touched by Him were healed.<sup>78</sup> What does one call it — weakness or power? It can only be both — the mystery of our redemption by a suffering God.

Secularization theology is true to Luther's theology of the cross only so long as it preserves the mystery of this great exchange. The cross is demystified when the best it can accomplish is an invitation to others to imitate the meaningless suffering of a Sisyphus-like suffering servant. The mystery is preserved when the glory of Easter happens *sub contraria specie*, when it happens under the appearance and sign of the cross. Luther's theology of the cross cannot be divorced from Jesus' resurrection, and that resurrection dare not be reduced to mere kerygmatic wordplay (or its presence apocalyptically postponed). The power of the resurrection is not a matter of verbal pieties, but it is the power of the God who creates *ex nihilo*, out of the Jesus emptied of all power on the cross, the Jesus whose name "is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . ." (Phil. 2:5-11). In the power of this cross and this resurrection we are invited to participate: "Have this

<sup>78</sup> See Althaus, p. 202, and Ludolphy, p. 141.

mind among yourselves, which you *have in Christ Jesus . . .*"

Charismatic renewal is true to Luther's theology of the cross when it does not circumvent the cross to achieve directly and immediately a witness with "power." Resurrection and Pentecostal power can never be divorced from the "blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:13-17). One may seek charismatic gifts<sup>70</sup> and power, but only

<sup>70</sup> Some critics of charismatic renewal are sympathetic until it comes to the question of "seeking" the so-called "gifts." They feel that simply to receive and recognize the gifts with gratitude reflects a theology of the cross, whereas actively to "seek" the gifts betrays a theology of glory. This distinction, however, seems contrary to Scripture (see 1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1; cf. Bittlinger, pp. 73—75). A prayer such as "Manifest yourself to me, O Lord" can be a legitimate expression of a theology of the cross so long as it is a prayer arising out of faith and not out of unbelief (see, for example, Ps. 17:6-7 and 86:14-17). Faith has as much right to desire a "manifestation of God" (or any of God's gifts) as it does to desire the "fruit of the Spirit." The two are essentially identical.

as Dietrich Bonhoeffer suggests: "When Christ calls a man—He bids him come and die."<sup>80</sup> Bonhoeffer's teacher, of course, was the apostle Paul, who wrote: "All I care for is to know Christ, to experience the power of his resurrection, and to share his sufferings, in growing conformity to his death, if only I may finally arrive at the resurrection from the dead."<sup>81</sup>

Reutlingen, West Germany

In fact, not to desire this might indicate an unwillingness to have God actively "interfering" with one's life and the wish to remain sovereign in one's own life—which is nothing less than a theology of glory.

<sup>80</sup> Harper, p. 125. See also Leonard H. Evans, "A Witness," *This Day*, XVII (June 1966), 40: "The power which Jesus Christ conveys through the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the power of love—not that of the sword."

<sup>81</sup> As quoted in Lesslie Newbigin, *Honest Religion for Secular Man* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 145.

## APPENDIX

To the honourable Ernest Schulze, Pastor in Belgern, My dear, good friend.

Grace and peace, in the Lord and in Jesus Christ be with you, Venerable Pastor. M. M. Schosser in Torgau, and the Counsellor in Belgern have written me to ask that I give to Madame Hans Körner some good advice and comfort in order to help her husband. Truly, I know of no worldly help to give, and if the physicians are at a loss to find a remedy, you may be sure that it is not a case of ordinary melancholy, but it must rather be an affliction that comes from the Devil, and that it must be counteracted by the power of Christ and with the prayer of faith. This is what we do, and what we have been accustomed to do. We had here a cabinet maker who, like M. Körner, was similarly afflicted with madness, and we cured him by prayer in Christ's name.

Accordingly you should proceed as follows: Go to him with your curate and two or three good men. Confident that you, as pastor of the place are clothed with the authority of the ministerial office, lay your hands upon him, and say, "Peace be with you, dear brother, from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ." Thereupon repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer over him in a clear voice, and close with these words:

"O God, almighty Father, who has told us through thy Son: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you,' and hast commanded and encouraged us to pray in his name, 'Ask and you shall receive,' and who in like manner hast said (in Psalm 50, v. 15) 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me' we unworthy sinners, relying on these thy words and commands pray for thy mercy with such faith as we can muster.

Graciously deign to free this man from all evil, and put to nought the work that Satan has done in him, to the honour of thy name and the strengthening of the faith of believers; through the same Jesus Christ thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, world without end. Amen."

Then, when you depart, lay your hands upon the man and say once more: "These signs shall follow them that believe; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

Do this again—even up to three times a day. Meanwhile let prayers be said in the chancel of the Church publicly until God answers them.

We are all one in our faithful prayers and petitions, with all the strength of our faith in God, and unceasingly.

Farewell. Other counsel than this I do not have.

I remain, (Martin Luther)

The year 1545.

WA Br XI, 112. Translation as given in Bernard Martin, *Healing for You* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1965), pp. 185—86. The expression "even up to three times a day" ought perhaps be translated "once on each of three successive days."