# EVANGELISM IN BIBLICAL HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY LIFE REPORT

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*Preamble*

The title given to Dr. Han for his paper was "Evangelism in Biblical History and Contemporary Life." In the Congress program this was changed to "Methods of Evangelization in Biblical History and Their Contemporary Relevance." This change was unfortunate since the interest of Dr. Han's paper was decidedly theological and not methodological. A number of participants attended the first session expecting the group to deal with methods; when they found it was not doing so they stayed away from the remaining sessions. Conversely a number who wanted to study the theological understanding of evangelism may well have stayed away from the group because of the incorrect title in the program.

The subject is a difficult one, and few of us in this group were in the habit of wrestling with serious theological issues. Lausanne reflected a sad deficiency among evangelicals at large. There were also a certain lack of communication among us in the area of semantics, which was difficult to correct in the short time we had together. In the light of these factors we deliberately tackled only part of the set syllabus.

The members of the group were fairly representative of worldwide Christianity and the different theological emphases of evangelism. We generally welcomed Dr. Han's paper and were grateful to him for tackling the subject in a serious way, and for being willing to raise provocative and difficult issues.

We were particularly grateful for the paper's emphasis on the one overall, worldwide purpose of God revealed in the Old and New Testaments in terms of promise, hope, the Kingdom of God, God working out his purpose in history, and the sure and certain eschatological hope. We welcomed, too, the critique of the basically individualistic preopposition of Western contemporary Christian thinking, feeling that this was an error into which we had all fallen.

Most of the group's time, however, was spent wrestling with the implications of this last point, and trying to find an alternative to an exclusively individualistic approach to evangelism. We were agreed that God's interest in the Old Testament revelation was not just in individuals but in nations, and we traced this element into the New Testament. (e.g. Matt 25:32, Rom. 11, Rev. 22:2). We sought to understand how such prophecies as Micah 4:1-7 and the more eschatological passages of Isaiah 40-66 were to be fulfilled in history. The variety of our theological background and the shortage of time precluded any final agreement on this matter, but among others we made the following four points:

1. We wish to disavow universalism in the sense that all men will be saved whether they personally accept Christ or not. But at the same time we recognize that there is a universal efficacy in Christ's work which will certainly be manifested at the Day of the Lord (Romans 8:19-21) and which in some ways is already manifested.
2. There is a sense in which the prayer "Thy Kingdom Come" can be fulfilled in a nation as well as in an individual. This would be particularly when, for example, the promises of Luke 4:18-19 have been fulfilled in that nation.
3. To avoid misunderstanding, and with Dr. Han's comment, we would altar the expression "the irrelevant character of personal evangelism" to "the irrelevant character of individualistic evangelism."
4. There were mixed feelings over interpreting Matt. 28:19 in the sense of "make nations my disciples." However, we responded readily to Dr. Han's call to stop concentrating exclusively on the individual in our evangelism and widen our horizons.

We felt evangelicals need to give much further thought to these matters.

Some course was expressed over the last paragraph of page 16. There is a sense in which "all nations are striving to become disciples of Jesus Christ" but we must not lose sight of the Bible's doctrine of man-in-revolt. Dr. Han clarified his statement, "Jesus only can fulfill democratic ideals" by referring to passages like Luke 1:51-53. He does not wish to be understood as referring to just one political structure.

It became clear in the group that some did not share fully in the optimism of Dr. Han regarding the implementation of God's purposes for the nations in history. We all agreed Christ will ultimately triumph, but some insisted that the biblical doctrines of the work of Satan and the Antichrist should be given more prominence in our thinking. Several references were made to Dr. Beyerhaus' paper and his interpretation of Matthew 24 in this connection.

Dr. Han had set himself to deal with the biblical doctrine of the Good News, which in itself is a very positive doctrine. We felt, however, that it would be unreal to concentrate on that to the neglect of the others, more negative elements in evangelism-conviction of sin, repentance and forgiveness. One way to correct the balance would be to add to Dr. Han's concept of the prophetic and kingly elements of the Old Testament and their fulfillment in Christ, the Levitical emphasis of the Old Testament and the New Testament doctrine of Christ our Priest and Atonement. No preaching of the Good News is complete, it was emphasized, without the element of the substitutionary atonement.

The group tackled the question "What changes in emphasis are necessary in our modern preaching of the Gospel in the light of this paper?", and gave three main answers:

1. We need to get back to a message that is as worldwide (or creation wide) as the message of the Bible. Our preaching must regain the vision of the eternal purpose of God, firmly grounded in history. We noted that apostolic preaching contained a clear commandment that "God's promises have been fulfilled" and we need to regain this element.
2. The Good News is *God's* Good News. As we prepare ourselves to preach it, we must guard against the notion that we are the source of the Good News and that everything depends on our presentation of it. Instead we must remember that the sovereign God goes

before us; we are reapers, not promoters.
3. We need to free ourselves from excessive individualism and get back to the Biblical vision of the community of man. This means that our evangelistic preaching must not isolate a man from his social context, and that we must accept and act upon the truth that when a man becomes a Christian he is linked into a real worldwide community and is given a new and demanding relationship with the whole world.



# THE CENTRAL THRUST OF THE MODERN CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

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Among the possible ways of considering the broad charismatic movement in our century, the committee of the congress has suggested the approach of the movement's emphasis be upon the energizing ministry of the Holy Spirit. In harmony with this welcome suggestion, the writer proposes to structure this paper with a vew to acquainting the reader with the origins, growth and dynamics of the broad charismatic movement of our time, particularly as these features relate to its evangelistic and missionary thrust. The paper does not profess to deal with, much less to evaluate, all aspects of Pentecostalism, nor even to mention all of the features which have accompanied its appearance.

Part 1 of the paper will define the movement, and sketch its historical antecedents and its origins, including contributions made to it by both white and black believers. Part 2 will emphasize the manner in which more recent pentecostal movements have affected the Christian world in the last two decades, particularly the Neo-Pentecostal form of the charismatic movement as it has exerted an influence in and through mainline religious bodies. This discussion will deal primarily with American Pentecostalism.

It is the major thesis of the writer that while Pentecostalism has had its vocal manifestations and its "motor movements," its deeper and more characteristic quality has been, and is, its emphasis upon the blessed Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. With this in mind, the writer proposes in Part 3 to deal specifically with the manner in which, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, the charismatic movement has found expression in a dynamic contribution to the evangelistic and missionary thrust of evangelical Christianity. This will include an attempted bird's eye view of the outreach of this movement in our world of today.

## 1. *The movement and its origins*

The term "charismatic movement" signifies, in its broad usage, that modern expression of activity of the Holy Spirit within Protestant Christendom in our century (and latterly within Roman Catholicism as well) which has for its primary sign or initial evidence of the baptism with (or in) the Holy Spirit the vocal manifestation of glossolalia (sometimes called xenolalia) or speaking in tongues. Like all movements involving the human spirit, the Pentecostal Movement had its origins in earlier historic expressions of the spiritual life. But like all operations of the Holy Spirit, it has had its unpredictable and sometimes baffling qualities. (It might be explained here, that we use the term