

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 view 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

"charismatic movement," with small letters, to denote the entire range of Pentecostalism, while the use of the same term with capital letters (as, Charismatic Movement) denotes the Neo-Pentecostal Movement of the past fifteen or twenty years among the old-line denominations.)

It needs to be noted at the outset that while Pentecostalism took form as a trend within existing religious bodies, it very soon became institutionalized. Thus, within two decades after its initial appearance, it had given rise to denominations with visible structure and order. These have in general followed the course of development which is typical of such bodies. The largest and best known of denominational or confessional Pentecostal groups is the Assemblies of God, including in 1969 some 8570 congregations and 625,660 members.

About two decades ago, there began to emerge within the non-pentecostal bodies phenomena very similar to those marking the charismatic movement at the beginning of the present century. This movement, perhaps best embodied in the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, is popularly known as Neo-Pentecostal. It represents a cutting edge of charismatic fervor in the more staid churches. More will be said later concerning this, and the manner in which Neo-Pentecostalism has become a force within Roman Catholic circles.

Religious movements seldom appear upon the stage of history without first being heralded by trends or institutions which bear at least some of the qualities which they themselves come to emphasize. It is generally recognized that the impact of so-called Modernism, and its related movement, that of the Social Gospel, produced or issued in a general neglect of the inner life within the major Protestant bodies. This brought an attending spiritual sterility and aridness which produced an undercurrent of spiritual longing, notably about the turn of the present century. Then, too, institutionalized Protestantism tended, by this same date, to be middle-class, both in membership and in outlook. As a result, many of the so-called lower classes — the urban and rural poor and the socially rejected — began to feel alienated from the mainline churches. Being unable to meet middle-class expectations in such matters as dress, education, and social usages, the working class was prepared to receive a new religious life-style which would afford them a sense of belonging — a place in which they could feel at home and participate without regard to class lines.

It might be noted, as an aside, that it was the same kind of conditions which through the centuries have given rise to "free church" movements. Actually, many of these same social features and trends contributed to the emergence of the Wesleyan revival of the eighteenth century. In other words, this is not the first time in history when such a configuration of situations has produced such a result.

With regard to the classical Pentecostalism of the early twentieth century, it was the coldness produced by the non-Evangelical trends in major church bodies, and the bourgeois tendency within their mentality,

which afforded a negative climate within which a more free, less class-oriented form of spiritual life was welcomed. These factors would not, in themselves, dictate the precise form which such a movement of the Spirit would take, except that they would create an expectation of a trend toward freedom and spontaneity.

Of the factors which gave concrete form to the emerging Pentecostal Movement at the turn of the present century, none was more significant than the Wesleyan Perfectionist trend as it took shape in the last three decades of the nineteenth century as the Holiness Movement, whose organizational title was the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness. Especially significant for the rise of Pentecostalism was the shift which came within this Holiness Movement in the late decades of the nineteenth century toward the identification of Entire Sanctification with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The earlier methodistic movement toward Christian Perfection stressed the work of Jesus Christ as Perfecter of the saints; but there came a gradual change as a result of the Camp Meeting movement. Under the strong influence of the Congregational minister and president of Oberlin College, Asa Mahan, the Christian Perfectionist movement came to give increasing attention to the role of the Holy Spirit as the sanctifying force in the "Second Blessing." This gives support to the view of Vinson Synan as expressed in his volume *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States*, to the effect that the historical roots of American Pentecostalism are to be found in the Wesleyan-Perfectionist tradition. Further, he traces the rise of Pentecostalism to the specifically Spirit-centered emphasis in this tradition.

This does not mean that the transition from the Spirit-oriented ministry of perfectionist groups, to the classical charismatic movement was a smooth one. Actually there arose a great deal of debate, and there came to be wide differences of opinion. Many regard the rising pentecostalism as being primarily a theological division within the Holiness Movement, centering in the problem of the *evidence* that one had been baptized with the Holy Spirit. But it is clear in any case that the charismatic movement had its roots in Wesleyanism, particularly as articulated by those whose theological base was found in the primacy of the Holy Spirit's role in the sanctification of the believer.

Accounts of the actual origination of the twentieth-century charismatic movement vary on at least one important point. Some writers insist that its primary impetus came from the ministry of the Reverend Charles Fox Parham, a supply pastor in the Methodist Episcopal Church in Kansas. Others disagree, and insist either that the credit for the origination of the movement must be divided between Parham's work and the revival at Azusa Street in Los Angeles, or that this latter event was the major factor which contributed to its rise. We will attempt to look at each of these estimates.

Charles Fox Parham opened Bethel Bible School near Topeka, Kansas

in October of 1900. From this as a base, Parham held large meetings in towns of the same state, in which participants were reportedly baptized with the Holy Spirit and healed of sickness. Even before his own special awakening in January of 1901, Parham had emphasized the teaching of the Spirit's baptism, evidenced by the speaking in tongues.

Pervency in prayer marked life at Bethel, and prolonged prayer vigils led to an intense feeling of expectancy. A student, Miss Agnes N. Ozman, had been combining fasting with earnest seeking, and on January 1, 1901, she received the Spirit's baptism (following the laying on of hands) and according to her own testimony, "Began to speak in tongues, glorifying God." She reports also having "talked several languages." In days following many others experienced the same manifestation, and as a result meetings were held in other cities in Kansas, and in the states of Texas and Missouri.

One of Parham's pupils, the Reverend W.J. Seymour, was invited to come to Los Angeles by Neelly Terry, the pastor of a black Holiness church in which Baptist preachers Joseph Smale and Frank Bartleman had already preached. (These two men had been influenced profoundly by the Welsh revival.) Finding some of his emphases unacceptable to Mr. Terry, Seymour went to a prayer meeting in Bonnie Brae Street, where on April 9, 1906, a number of believers received the baptism of the Spirit, the first being an eight-year-old black boy. Seymour shortly rented a Methodist Church building at 312 Azusa Street. In this Azusa Street Mission, three years of continuous prayer and evangelistic meetings took place, and significant numbers of believers, both black and white, received the Spirit and spoke in tongues.

By the end of the year 1906, there were no fewer than nine Pentecostal groups meeting in Los Angeles. Whites withdrew from the Azusa Street Mission two years later. Viewing the moving of the Spirit here, some estimate that it was but an extension of what actually began in Topeka in 1900-1901, and that this earlier manifestation was the true beginning of the Pentecostal movement. Others incline to the view that the movement did not really take root in America prior to the Los Angeles revival, and that the meetings in Azusa Street marked the actual founding of Pentecostalism.

It is not the purpose of this writer to take sides; but it is important to note that to our black brethren and sisters must go credit for a significant share in the establishment of the charismatic movement in the United States. Thus Nils Bloch-Hoell can write, "It was in *Los Angeles* (italics his) that the Pentecostal Movement first truly took root and flourished . . . ."

## 2. *The impact of the movement*

Thus far we have been concerned with the origination of the classical Pentecostal movement in the early part of the present century. It needs

to be noted at the outset that while the earlier phase of the modern charismatic movement found its following among those in the levels of society which were alienated from the mainline churches, Neo-Pentecostalism has, on the other hand, appeared from within the established denominations. It has reached members of the major Protestant bodies, and significant elements within the Roman Catholic Church also.

No discussion of the charismatic movement of our day would be complete without special attention to the manner in which it has penetrated the major Protestant denominations. The selection of data at this point will necessarily be limited; it is hoped, however, that the following paragraphs will afford an overview of this penetration, and suggest as well some of the underlying reasons for its success. The extended ministries of men like Oral Roberts began at least two decades ago, to have an impact upon the devout in the mainline denominations. By 1960 there could be found those who witnessed to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, with tongues-speaking as "an initial witness," within the several branches of Lutheranism, the Protestant Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church, the United Presbyterian Church, and others. Among those having experienced this are both ministers and lay persons.

Significant numbers of clergy are reported to have experienced this manifestation in the American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, and the Lutheran Church in America. At the First International Lutheran Conference on the Holy Spirit held in Minneapolis, Minnesota August 8-12, 1972, an unofficial gathering, the extent of charismatic experiences within the Lutheran ministry was reported by Norris L. Wogen of the ALC. He indicated that 1,000 pastors have "received the baptism of the Spirit," 400 in the ALC, 400 in the LC-MS and 200 in the LCA. Laymen were also prominent in this Conference, at which many non-Lutherans were present. The Conference also included, significantly enough, many Lutherans from Europe who witnessed of this same grace.

Similar penetration of other Protestant bodies has occurred. The appearance of Neo-Pentecostalism within the Protestant Episcopal Church seems to have begun with the parish of St. Mark's Church in Van Nuys, California, when the rector, Dennis Bennett, who had earlier professed to be an atheist, received "this baptism" and shortly sixty of his parishioners. Before long, there were at least twelve of the clergy in the diocese of Bishop James A. Pike who had spoken in tongues, so that the Protestant Episcopal Church three years later (i.e., in 1963) sent officials to the headquarters of the Assemblies of God in Springfield, Missouri to discuss the question of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Similar appearances of Neo-Pentecostalism were found in the early 1960s within the United Methodist and United Presbyterian Churches. Surprisingly, perhaps, the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood, which is the largest Presbyterian congregation in the world, is said to

have had (in 1964) six hundred members professing to have received the gift of tongues. Thus, it could no longer be said that Pentecostalism was exclusively a movement within persons and groups marginal to the life of America.

The appearance of Neo-Pentecostalism among Roman Catholics is another of the surprising phenomena of the past two decades. Again space prevents a detailed tracing of the rise of Catholic Pentecostalism. It did, remarkably enough, appear first in academic circles, beginning at Duquesne University, and shortly spreading to the University of Notre Dame, with an overflow in the direction of the university city of Ann Arbor, Michigan, of Iowa State University at Ames, Iowa, and of Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. From the beginning there was a significant involvement of professors of theology, of philosophy, of history, and of physics.

The movement spread from university circles to convents, and into the parishes. At least seven conferences have been held to "work out the theology of the Pentecostal experience within the Roman context." Well educated persons unashamedly professed their new-found pentecostal experiences in these gatherings. Recent estimates place the number of Catholic Pentecostals somewhere between 60,000 and 100,000. The movement within the Roman Catholic Church has been greeted with caution but in a basically positive way, by the hierarchy, and the hope is frequently expressed that pentecostalism among its members will be channeled creatively through careful articulation and internal discipline. From time to time, sober counsel is given at this point, both by those outside the charismatic branch of the church, and by those who themselves have espoused it.

### 3. *The dynamic contribution of the movement*

Having looked at the antecedents, central thrust, and confessional quality of the broad charismatic movement, and having traced briefly its spread and current extent, we turn to an examination of what is felt to be its major emphasis and most significant outreach. While most branches of orthodox Christianity have been "Son-oriented" and thus have been primarily concerned with Christology, the Pentecostal movement (with its neo-pentecostal resurgence) has tended to be Spirit-oriented. The expression(s) of this were frequently misunderstood by most Christian bodies, even evangelical groups, in the decades following Bethel Bible School and the Azusa Street Mission. The tendency was to seize almost exclusively upon the vocal and motor aspects of Pentecostalism, so that its central drive was frequently overlooked.

It is only reasonable, however, to permit charismatics to speak for themselves at the point of their understanding of the major thrust of the movement. Nils Bloch-Hoell observes that the Pentecostal movement would have been dynamic and aggressive, "even if the tongues

emphasis and eschatology had not been the major motive." It has been characteristic of the charismatic movement to regard itself as the true contemporary representative of original Christianity, whose primary emphasis is regarded to have been upon the person and work of the Holy Spirit as the Endurer, the Enlightener and the Energizer.

Dr. J. Rodman Williams, an astute and sympathetic Presbyterian writer and former professor in Austin Presbyterian Seminary, confirms this view of the primacy of the Holy Spirit, in and of himself, in Pentecostalism. In his perceptive book, *The Pentecostal Reality*, he writes, "... The Pentecostal is essentially talking about something that is deeply existential. Hence the expression used thus far — "baptism," "filling," "gift," "reception," and others — though biblical, are not primarily understood by exegeting certain texts. Rather, these terms are helpful ways of defining what has occurred. Others may wonder why the Pentecostal witness makes so much use of this kind of language . . . nonetheless, the person of Pentecostal experience finds in such language the biblical way of expressing what has taken place in his life.

If Christendom in general has not understood the classical pentecostal at this point, it may be due to the fact that Christendom itself has, in general, failed to deal adequately with the biblical teaching concerning the Holy Spirit. To the major confessions, "The Holy Spirit has been recognized as fully God, third person in the Trinity, but his particular field of activity has not stood out with sufficient clarity." Thus the outsider tends not to understand the charismatic believer as one to whom the Holy Spirit has opened up entirely new dimensions, so that it is in reality the Holy Spirit who forms the center and core of his faith.

A representative of the charismatic movement whose interdenominational contacts have been broad expresses the matter in these words, "Finally the essential doctrinal content of pentecostalism and neo-pentecostalism is not speaking in tongues. Jesus promised power — not tongues . . . the charismatic renewal involves a mighty powerful experiential filling of believers by the Holy Spirit."

It goes without saying that Pentecostals do not sever the Holy Spirit and his work from Jesus Christ. There is full recognition among the doctrinally conscious that the Holy Spirit is given by and through Christ. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is, in the final analysis, Christ's bestowal, Christ's baptism.

The question of the relation of the Spirit's baptism to the ordinance of water baptism has given some concern to charismatics, especially among Roman Catholics and Lutherans. In an article which is in reality a pastoral letter to Catholic pentecostals, Miss J. Massingberd Ford, associate professor of theology in the University of Notre Dame, shows an awareness of this problem. In her excellent little devotional manual for charismatics, *The Pentecostal Experience*, she makes clear the distinction which she feels she must draw between the Spirit's baptism, on the one hand, and the sacrament of Catholic baptism on the other, "One must ever bear in mind that in distinction to the sacrament of baptism, this release (baptism) of the Spirit is not a permanent state, and does not give an indelible character to the individual."

A similar concern is expressed by Paul F. Hutchinson, pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in St. Louis, Missouri, in his "Open Letter to Charismatic Lutherans." His words at this point are these, "When the

baptism in the Holy Spirit is separated from the initial reception of the Holy Spirit in infant baptism or adult conversion . . . then certain dangers open up."

It is time to take a careful look, in closing, at the evangelistic and missionary activities which Pentecostals have undertaken under the Spirit's impulse. We note, first, that they were from the earliest impelled to go to people where they were. As circuit riders without horses, they sought out the poor, the neglected, the alienated. They afforded, through their meetings, an opportunity to the anonymous and the voiceless to *belong* and to *speak*.

Further, they followed their people into the cities, perhaps sensing before many other groups the trend toward urbanization. If a personal word is permitted here, the writer is a member of a small denomination which is not charismatically oriented, which for years preferred small country or village churches, with burying grounds attached. It required time to persuade the writer's denomination that the future of America lay in urbanization, and to turn its energies toward the building of city congregations. Not so with the pentecostal bodies!

The emphasis upon the Holy Spirit has afforded these churches a powerful impetus toward missions. In his unique way of expressing things, David J. duPlessis explains how the pentecostals have accomplished so much in the past seventy years. He says, "The reason why pentecostals have been so successful in missions is because they are pentecostal."

The annals of the charismatic movement are full of accounts of the way in which persons untrained (by using standards) went forth, without any support from institutions or boards, and planted churches in the most forbidding and unlikely places. Who would have expected, humanly speaking, that T. B. Barratt, son of an English family who settled in Norway so the elder Barratt could manage a small sulphur mine in Hardanger, would have become the European apostle of pentecostalism? Yet from the influence of his Spirit-filled life (and he himself secured a fine education) there proceeded forces by which the message took root in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark, and shortly in Central Europe also.

Similarly, two Scandinavian-Americans felt called, about 1910, to go to Brazil. They went by naked faith, with no sponsoring board. Within fifty years the assemblies which grew out of their ministries came to number some 1500, with members totaling over a quarter of a million. About the same time an Italian-American from Chicago went to Brazil, alone and without visible support. Today the work which he initiated has about an equal number of congregations and of members. Together the two fellowships include over half of all Protestants in Brazil, and over one-tenth of all pentecostals in the world.

The charismatic movement in Chile had the most modest, even forbidding, origin. An American pastoring a Methodist Church there received the pentecostal blessing, was asked to leave his pastorate, and ventured forth on faith. In the wake of his ministry has come a Chilean pentecostalism including, in four groups (the Iglesia Metodista Pentecostal, the Iglesia Evangelica Pentecostal, the Mision Iglesia Pentecostal, and the Iglesia Pentecostal de Chile), a total membership of 920,000 members. These four bodies include two-thirds of all Protestants in Chile.

Similar illustrations of the evangelical and missionary impetus afforded the charismatic movement by its single-minded emphasis upon the baptism of the Holy Spirit could be brought from Central Africa, South Africa, Colombia, and even the U.S.S.R. It may be said safely that seldom since apostolic days have such single advances within the Christian movement been registered.

Lest it be thought that it is only in the lands just noted that pentecostalism is "on the move," let it be said that in the so-called Western world (including western Europe) the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (commonly known as the FGBMFI) has opened the charismatic ministry to laymen. This movement has, by enlisting the energies and gifts of men well-placed in the business world, shattered the earlier stereotype by which pentecostalism was regarded as a phenomenon largely confined to the economically deprived. The FGBMFI is an aggressive and effective instrument of evangelism, to all classes, in the U.S. and abroad.

The charismatic movement has also moved into the "highways and byways" of the youth subculture, for example, into the Jesus Revolution. Included among the triumphs registered in this area is the penetration of the victims of drug addiction and of ghetto gang warfare.

Perhaps enough has been said to demonstrate the position, that a single-minded emphasis upon the Holy Spirit as Baptizer, Energizer, and Empowerer has produced an outreach into areas largely neglected by the more conventional and "respectable" branches of the Christian movement which is amazing in its scope. Pentecostalism has always regarded itself as an instrument of church renewal. Its very life has consisted in a thrust toward *persons*, whether near at hand or afar off. Actually, early pentecostalism, taking Acts 1:8 with deadly seriousness, tended to find much of its "Jerusalem and all Judaea" in the region of Samaria. Possibly its ultimate success in "the uttermost parts of the earth" was due to its faithfulness to the call to society's Samaritans — the alienated, the neglected, the persons being bypassed in the march of worldly progress.

It goes without saying that no religious movement which might emerge today would face exactly the same kind of world as the charismatic movement encountered between 1900 and 1974. But if the details of the world of the *2.7 billion who have never heard the name of Jesus Christ* may differ, the demands upon the Church Militant remain very much the same. Could it be that the broad charismatic movement has something exceedingly important to say to any group which takes the Great Commission seriously? If so, that "something" will no doubt focus upon the blessed Holy Spirit — his special ministry within the hearts and the lives of Christian believers who are willing to grant him an utter centrality.