

The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement

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The Movement's Place in 20th Century Religious History

Our essay committee chose the Pentecostal/charismatic movement as the third of the three top religious events in the 20th Century. There is little doubt that this movement, which began in the early morning hours of January 1, 1901, falls into that category.ⁱ This first section will present a collage of information that will give us a basic definition of the movement and how it has grown over the past 100 years.

Peter Wagner of Fuller Seminary writes, "In all of human history, no other non-political, non-militaristic, voluntary human movement has grown as rapidly as the Pentecostal-charismatic movement in the last twenty-five years."ⁱⁱ Vinson Synan, a Pentecostal and dean of the School of Divinity at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia, writes, "When I did my first research on Pentecostalism around 1965, there were barely 50,000,000 Pentecostals in the world. Now, as this revision [his 1997 revision to his 1971 classic history of the movement] appears, that number has grown to encompass some 217,000,000 "denominational Pentecostals" around the globe. Added to this are the millions of "Charismatics" and "Third Wavers" in the mainline churches who were inspired by the Pentecostals. All together, the aggregate number of Pentecostals/charismatic [sic] in the world numbered some 465,000,000 in 1995." It is "the second largest family of Christians in the world after the Roman Catholic Church."ⁱⁱⁱ

Who are the Pentecostals and charismatics? David Barrett, the leading demographic expert on the movement, defines the movement like this: "The 20th-Century renewal in the Holy Spirit [is] one single cohesive movement into which a vast proliferation of all kinds of individuals and communities have been drawn in a whole range of different circumstances of a period of 250 years. Whether termed pentecostals, charismatics, or third-wavers, they share a single basic experience."^{iv} Below are some of Barratt's major divisions:^v

Pre-Pentecostals Barratt writes, "There have always been sizeable numbers of such individuals which have experienced or demonstrated pentecostal phenomena... Those in the last 200 years, and which may reasonably be regarded as the antecedents of the 20th century renewal, fall into four main categories." He then lists the categories: (1) Various Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican monks, priests, and nuns; (2) Mormons under Joseph Smith and Brigham Young; (3) Charismatic groupings in new movements of the 19th century which have now become denominations. He lists the Salvation Army as one of these groupings; (4) Holiness bodies, especially those that arose in the United States that taught a "second-blessing" experience plus related Pentecostal phenomena.^{vi}

Classical Pentecostals. These are the original Pentecostal denominations in the United States and their world-wide counterparts. The most well-known of these groups would probably be the Assemblies of God. They include three strands: the Holiness or Methodist Pentecostals, the Baptist Pentecostals, and the "Oneness" or unitarian Pentecostals.

Protestant Charismatics. This stream began about 1960 as the Pentecostal spirit flowed over into the mainline Protestant denominations.

Catholic Charismatics. This stream began in 1967 as the Pentecostal spirit flowed over into the Catholic church.

Postcharismatics. This is a large group of people who have drifted out of the movement for one reason or another. Some may have rejected it, while many still identify themselves as charismatic.

“*Third Wavers.*” These are mainline evangelicals who emphasize signs and wonders but who don’t identify with the Pentecostal or charismatic movements.

Admittedly somewhat dated, David Barrett’s 1988 projections of the year 2000 Pentecostal/charismatic population gives us a sense of the vast numbers involved.^{vii}

Denominational Pentecostals	268,149,500
Postpentecostals	5,500,000
(Chinese Pentecostals	70,000,000)
Protestant Charismatics	18,200,200
Protestant Postcharismatics	53,900,00
Catholic Charismatics	23,101,300
Catholic Postcharismatics	86,875,000
Mainline Third Wavers	65,000,000

Synan presents David Barrett’s 1995 combined statistics and projections for the above groups:^{viii}

1901	40	1975	96,000,000
1945	16,000,000	1985	247,000,000
1955	27,000,000	1990	460,000,000
1965	50,000,000	2000	550,000,000

David Barrett projects that by 2025 there will be 740,000,000 Pentecostals and charismatics in the world.^{ix}

In the 1988 *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, David Barrett wrote, “The sheer magnitude and diversity of the numbers beggar the imagination. [There are] 332 million affiliated [Pentecostal/charismatic] church members. Of these, 176 million are Pentecostals, 123 million are charismatic, and 28 million are third wavers.”^x

Under the section entitled “The Tide Surges In” Barrett writes,

“All three waves are still continuing to surge in. Massive expansion and growth continue at a current rate of 19 million new members a year or over 54,000 a day. One-third of this is purely demographic (births minus deaths in the Pentecostal/charismatic community); two-thirds are converts and other new members. In the early days of all three waves annual rates of growth were enormous; now they have declined to...6 percent per year for the Renewal as a whole.”^{xi}

Barrett adds the following demographics,

“Some 29 percent of all members worldwide are white, 71 percent nonwhite. Members are more urban than rural, more female than male, more children (under eighteen) than adults, more Third World (36 percent) than Western world (32 percent), more living in poverty (87 percent) than affluent (13 percent).”^{xii} He writes, “The Pentecostals, charismatics, and third-wavers who make up this Renewal today number 21 percent of organized global Christianity.”^{xiii}

In regard to the growth of the Pentecostal/charismatic movement, we could note the following: the rapid growth of the movement in Africa and South America; the high visibility of Pentecostal/charismatic televangelists; the number of large charismatic megachurches; and the Church Growth movement’s entry into and support of the charismatic movement in the early 1980s.

The History of the Pentecostal/charismatic Movement

The Methodist context

The Pentecostal movement is simply the spiritual extension of the Holiness movement of the late 19th Century, which was a movement in the Methodist church. We recall that Charles Wesley's lifelong work was fueled by his experience of receiving a second blessing subsequent to his conversion. Although he had been born and raised as a Christian, Wesley felt his life was lacking. He yearned for a conversion that would set him free to live the kind of God-pleasing life he yearned for. He received that experience and subsequently taught that others should receive it.

The Methodist church was built on that foundation, but in the ensuing years it lost the initial zeal Wesley had imparted to it. The history of the Methodist church in America is marked by various seasons of revival followed by periods of deadness, during which many Methodists yearned for more revival. Two revivals stand out and should be noted. The first took place under Devereaux Jarratt in 1775 in Brunswick County, Virginia. During Jarratt's preaching many claimed to have received the second blessing. The participants experienced various emotional and physical phenomena. These revival services "seemed quite similar to later Pentecostal worship."^{xiv} The second was the Cane Ridge revival, which took place in Bourbon County, Kentucky in 1801. A series of church services led to a full scale revival, during which many experienced emotional and physical reactions similar to those in Pentecostalism.

As the 19th Century continued, in the minds of many the membership of the Methodist church had become worldly and unsanctified. Many continued to carry on John Wesley's quest for holiness, but were unsatisfied by the minimal or non-existent attempts of fellow church members to do the same. The tension between the "unsanctified but satisfied," and the "unsanctified and unsatisfied" grew so great that in the latter decades of the 19th Century, the Methodist church began to see its membership polarizing.

The camp meeting, which had been successful in pre-Civil War times as a tool of renewal, had fallen into disuse. Conservative Southern Methodist clergy believed that "the general religious inertia of the times could be cured only by a return to the prewar camp-meeting revivalism."^{xv} In the north, plans were made to hold such a camp meeting, "the special object of which should be the promotion of the work, of entire sanctification."^{xvi} Synan quotes from the call

Come, brothers and sister of the various denominations, and let us in this forest-meeting, as in other meetings for the promotion of holiness, furnish an illustration of evangelical union, and make common supplication for the descent of the Spirit upon ourselves, the church, the nation, and the world.^{xvii}

This camp meeting, held in 1867, was the beginning of the what is called the Holiness movement. This movement had as its goal the descent of the Holy Spirit to effect renewal. Consistent with their theology, the Methodists were looking for their members to receive the second blessing on a wholesale level.

A complete treatment of the holiness movement is beyond the scope of this paper. To summarize, the Holiness movement, which centered around the National Holiness Association, was generally well received in the Methodist church until the mid 1880s. At that time the established Methodist church took a stand against the "second blessing" teaching of the holiness bodies. While there had always been a fringe of the holiness movement that felt separation from the Methodist church was the only option, more and more middle of the road holiness advocates

were drawn to that possibility. Synan puts the numbers into perspective. Of the 4,000,000 members of the Methodist church (the largest denomination at the time) about one-third to one-half were part of the holiness movement. When push came to shove, about 100,000 left the Methodist church, “an indication that loyalty to the church’s organization was greater than loyalty to the church’s doctrines.”^{xviii}

Yet those who left the Methodist church would have a significant impact on the formation of American Christianity. “Never before in the history of the nation,” writes Synan, “had so many churches been founded in so short a time. A measure of the intensity of the conflict over sanctification is the fact that twenty-three holiness denominations began in the relatively short period of seven years between 1893 and 1900.”^{xix}

The Holiness context

Without this history, Pentecostalism seems to appear out of nowhere. But set in the context of the holiness movements, Pentecostalism is seen to be but the next step in the continuum of second blessings.

Mainstream Methodism promoted a rather tame “second blessing” theology. In fact, many within the movement viewed growth in sanctification much like Lutherans do, as a gradual process. Within the Holiness movement, however, second blessing theology became much more of a defining factor in the essence of being a Christian. Those on the right wing fringe taught that the kind of experiences that were part of earlier camp revivals should be a normal part of church life, at least as initial evidence that a person had received the Holy Spirit’s second work of grace.

For the sake of understanding the outbreak of the Pentecostal movement, it is important to understand this right wing element of the holiness movement. Most of the holiness denominations that started in the 1880s and 1890s would remain holiness bodies. (The Church of the Nazarene is perhaps the best known of these.) However, this right wing group, located mostly in the south and midwest, would become a seedbed for Pentecostalism when it broke out in Los Angeles in 1906.

Benjamin Irwin was one of the best known and most influential of the right wing holiness preachers. He started what he called the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church. The church was named after the baptism of fire which Irwin experienced and taught. He viewed his baptism of fire as a third blessing, the next beyond the second blessing of entire sanctification. The phenomena that accompanied this “blessing” was reminiscent of the camp revivals. “Those receiving ‘the fire’ would often shout, scream, speak in other tongues, fall into trances, receive the holy dance and holy laugh, and even get the ‘jerks.’”^{xx} This church formed an important link between the Methodist holiness movement and Pentecostalism. Synan writes,

By teaching that the baptism of the Holy Ghost was an experience separate from and subsequent to sanctification, it laid the basic doctrinal premise of the later movement. It is probable that Charles F. Parham, the man who initiated the Pentecostal revival in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901, received from Irwin the basic idea of a separate baptism of the Holy Ghost following sanctification. Indeed, for a time in 1899, Parham promoted the “baptism of fire” in his *Apostolic Faith* magazine. In a social, doctrinal, and intellectual sense, the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church was a direct precursor of the modern Pentecostal movement in North America.^{xxi}

Charles F. Parham and the beginning of Pentecostalism

A holiness preacher, Charles Parham, took the more radical holiness teaching and made one important modification to it. Up to now, holiness theology stressed a second reception of the Holy Spirit, a second blessing such as Charles Wesley had experienced. However, holiness teachers were ambiguous as to which physical manifestations were proof that one had received this blessing. Various teachers stressed various signs—healing; physical phenomena such as jerking, barking, or laughing; and speaking in other languages. In that context Parham did two things. First, he established the teaching that there is only one sign that is a valid witness that a person has received the Holy Spirit, and that sign is speaking in tongues. Second, he viewed this blessing as a third blessing. These two teachings are what made the Pentecostal movement distinct from the holiness movement.

Synan summarizes Parham's background like this:

Parham's theology by 1900 had come from many sources. Just prior to the opening of the Topeka school, he had traveled to Chicago to hear Alexander Dowie [a well-known faith healer]. From there had had gone to Nyack, New York, to hear A. B. Simpson of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and to Shiloh, Maine, to investigate Frank Sandford's "Holy Ghost and Us" church. In Sandford's school there was a student named Jeannie Glassey who claimed to speak miraculously in an African dialect proving that she was called to be a missionary to Africa. While in Shiloh, Parham heard glossolalia for the first time when several students came down out of a "prayer tower" speaking in tongues after several hours of intercessory prayer. Returning to Topeka, he felt that there was still something beyond the experience of sanctification, perhaps a charismatic baptism in the Holy Spirit, that would be needed "to meet the challenge of the new century."^{xxii}

We quickly summarize the history leading up to the Azusa Street revival. Parham established a Bible school in Topeka, Kansas in 1900. There he asked his students to study the Bible and tell him what was the sign that a person had received the Holy Spirit. They unanimously answered that it was speaking in foreign languages. They prayed for the experience. After Parham laid hands on one Agnes Ozman, she began speaking in Chinese. In the following days others received the blessing. This happened in the early morning hours of January 1, 1901, a date whose significance is not lost on the Pentecostals. Parham received the blessing sometime later and immediately began preaching it on a revival tour.

Parham moved to Houston, Texas, where he started another Bible school. There a black man named William J. Seymour was allowed to sit in the hall and listen to his lectures. Seymour was very interested in holiness teaching, and accepted Parham's teaching about the third blessing and speaking in tongues. This was in 1905. Early in 1906 Seymour was invited by a lady he had met in Houston to come to Los Angeles and preach at the holiness church she attended.

Seymour arrived in Los Angeles. He was promptly barred from the church where he had been invited to preach. He continued holding services in the home of Richard Asbury. It was there that Seymour himself "fell to the floor in religious ecstasy, speaking in tongues."^{xxiii} When the house grew too small to accommodate the crowds that began to gather, the group was able to secure an abandoned church building at 312 Asuza Street. The revival on Asuza Street, under the leadership of William Seymour, continued around the clock for three and a half years.

From Asuza Street to the World

The importance of Asuza street dare not be underestimated. "By the end of the year many other missions had been opened in the Los Angeles area and others were beginning to operate in cities all over the United States, as visitors to Azusa Street carried the "fire" to their own

homes.”^{xxiv} Soon the news of what was happening there reached across the world. Holiness leaders, particularly those from the South, traveled to the revival, got the spirit, and returned home to spread it in their own churches. The more radical holiness churches provided a natural seedbed for the Pentecostal spirit.

What’s more, whether through first-hand experience at Azusa Street, or second-hand through others who had been there, men and women from around the world returned home to spread the Pentecostal message. Although there were some contemporary revivals of a similar nature taking place in other countries, most of the world-wide spread of Pentecostalism can be traced directly or indirectly to Asuza Street.

William Durham of Chicago traveled to Los Angeles and returned home. His work founded the Pentecostal movement in the midwest. From his mission in Chicago the movement spread north to Canada. A black preacher named Sturdevant from New York City traveled to Los Angeles and carried the “spirit” back home. Gaston Cashwell, a leader in the holiness movement in the south, made a trip to Los Angeles and returned with the “spirit.” He became known as the “Apostle of Pentecost” to the south and through him a number of holiness churches became pentecostal. Thomas Barratt, a Methodist missionary from Norway, was in New York City attempting to raise funds for a mission in Oslo. On hearing of the revival in Los Angeles, he began preparations for a trip there. Yet before he left for Los Angeles, he received the Pentecostal spirit and took it back to Norway. Through him the movement spread into Europe. Synan lists other connections between Asuza Street and Italy, Brazil, Chile, South Africa, Russia, Korea, and Nigeria.^{xxv}

The movement matures

The Pentecostal movement had rough beginnings, but matured over time. Synan labels the years from 1906-1920 as years of criticism and controversy. As could be expected, there was a wide variety of opposition from the various mainline churches against both Pentecostal doctrine and practice.

Controversy shook the movement from the beginning. The “finished work” controversy began when non-holiness churches, particularly Baptist, joined the movement. In the minds of many, what the holiness groups referred to as the second blessing of sanctification and the new third blessing of tongues, could be joined into one blessing, a “finished work” that included entire sanctification and the Holy Spirit’s gifts.

The “Jesus Name” controversy in the newly formed Assemblies of God church “threatened to destroy it in its infancy.”^{xxvi} Many taught that there was only one person in the godhead, Jesus. “The eighteen-month-old Assemblies of God lost 156 preachers out of 585 and over a hundred congregations.”^{xxvii} Unitarian Pentecostals or “oneness” denominations still exist in the United States and other countries and make up about 25% of Pentecostalism.

The Pentecostal churches weathered these and other controversies, as well as a number of personality clashes in the 1920’s. To trace its development in the ensuing years is outside the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that over time it gained more respectability. Aimee Semple McPherson, who started the Foursquare Gospel Church, gained a national following and became well-known even in non-Pentecostal circles. At first, Pentecostalism was a religion of the “lower classes,” but as time went on, this changed. Following the second World War, “the Pentecostals began to rise on the social and economic scale along with the rest of American society, partaking of the general postwar prosperity.”^{xxviii} In 1943 several Pentecostal churches were founding members of the National Association of Evangelicals. Also, the number of Pentecostal Bible

colleges grew over the years, and as it did, the educational level of Pentecostal ministers gradually increased.

Foundations of the Neo-Pentecostal (charismatic) movement

In the 1960s the Pentecostal spirit spilled over into the mainline denominations. This is called the Neo-Pentecostal or charismatic movement. Such a thing was inevitable. Unlike a strict doctrinal formula, a spirit can adapt itself readily to the teachings and practices of a wide range of churches.

Synan writes,

For over fifty years, there were untold hundreds of ministers and thousands of lay persons in the traditional churches who received the Pentecostal experience and spoke in tongues. During this time these new Pentecostals had only two options: keep quiet about their experience, or be expelled from their churches.^{xxix}

In the mid 1950's a Pentecostal named Oral Roberts began a healing ministry that became world famous. He "burst upon the consciousness of the nation through his pioneering ministry in the budding television industry. By the early 1960s millions of Americans were introduced to Pentecostalism in their living rooms by way of Roberts' ministry."^{xxx} By 1967 Roberts saw that his main support was not from fellow Pentecostals, but from the mainline Methodist church. He decided to change denominational affiliation and was received by the Methodist church. We should also note that the Catholic bishops in America became concerned over Roberts' widespread appeal to Catholics.

The Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, begun by Demos Shakarian in 1952, provided a low-key way for Pentecostal businessmen to introduce their mainline business friends to Pentecostalism. "The Full Gospel Business Men played a major role in winning thousands of traditional churchgoers to the Pentecostal experience."^{xxxi}

Closet Pentecostals could remain in the closet only so long. In 1959, an Episcopalian priest in Van Nuys, California by the name of Dennis Bennett heard of the Pentecostal baptism and sought it for himself. A short time later several other members of his parish also received it. For honesty's sake, Bennett announced his experience to his congregation on April 3, 1960. By the second service Bennett knew he had to resign, and did do. The turmoil at Saint Mark's was picked up by the major wire services. "*Time* magazine reported that 'now glossolalia seems to be on its way back in U.S. churches—not only in the uninhibited Pentecostal sects, but even among the Episcopalians."^{xxxii}

This scene would be replayed in almost every American denomination.

These "Neo-Pentecostals" as they were soon dubbed, were somewhat different from the older, classical Pentecostals. An early leader, Jean Stone, editor of *Trinity* magazine, reported that the new Pentecostals exhibited 'less emotion in receiving the gift of tongues after which they are spoken at will—their private use more important than public, more oriented to clergy and professional classes, more Bible-centered as against experience, not separatist, more orderly meetings with strict adherence to Pauline directives, less emphasis on tongues.'^{xxxiii}

"By the end of the 1960s, Pentecostalism, roundly rejected a half century before by the mainline churches, began a triumphal entry into the heart of those very churches... Within a decade of Bennett's experience, it was estimated that 10 percent of the clergy and a million lay members of the mainline churches had received the baptism and had remained in their

churches.”^{xxxiv} And this is to say nothing of the many in the Catholic church who became charismatics. We will talk more about this in the next section.

The Relation of the Movement to Vatican II and Ecumenism

Our conference is covering the three main Christian religious movements of our century. It might be good to take a few minutes, step back, and look at all three together. When we do, we will see that they are not three completely separate movements, but are quite interrelated and have had a profound effect on each other.

Pentecostalism and Vatican II

Consider the position the Catholic church found itself in during the late 1950’s and early 1960’s. The “fortress mentality” of the Council of Trent was still official church policy and very much a part of their thinking, at least in the traditional wing of the church. Such a position was easier to maintain when the mainline Protestant churches still held on to their own distinctive doctrines. However, the winds of ecumenism were blowing stronger all the time and denominational barriers were eroding. To make matters more complicated, the charismatic movement was beginning in the Protestant churches. This had a very ecumenical flavor, and some may have foreseen that it would affect the Catholic church. For the Catholics to continue to maintain a fortress mentality would have harmed the church, to say the least.

It may be difficult to demonstrate how conscious the bishops at Vatican II were of the impending impact of the charismatic movement on their church. Synan points out that the council produced many documents on “the Holy Spirit and the charismatic nature of the church.”^{xxxv} Leading the way in this emphasis were the bishops from Chile, where Pentecostalism had been growing rapidly since 1909.

One thing is clear, however. The effects of Vatican II opened the door for the movement to infiltrate the church. If Vatican II had not taken the position it did over against Protestants, 20th Century church history would have been different. At the very least, the Catholic church would have had a great internal struggle on its hands. As it turned out, the decisions of Vatican II saved the Catholic church from such a struggle, and it increased the growth and influence of the charismatic movement even more than its entry into mainline Protestant churches. This is certainly true for the South American church.

The validity of this observation is borne out by the fact that one year after Vatican II ended, the Pentecostal spirit flooded into the Catholic church.^{xxxvi} The movement entered via the academic world. First, two theological professors at Duquesne University sought and received the spirit through the help of an Episcopal priest in a Presbyterian-led prayer group.^{xxxvii} A letter from one of the two, Ralph Kiefer, to some students and faculty members at Notre Dame, led them to investigate this phenomena. To illustrate how the Pentecostal spirit progresses through and across denominational lines, we note how it happened in South Bend.

After some investigation and initial skepticism, a group of some nine students gathered in the apartment of Bert Ghezzi, where they were baptized in the Holy Spirit, though without manifesting overt spiritual gifts. For further help, they made contact with Ray Bullard, a member of the Assemblies of God and president of the South Bend chapter of the Full Gospel Businessmen. Bert Ghezzi describes how this group of Catholic intellectuals received the gift of tongues: “We went to Ray’s house the following week and met in a basement room with eleven Pentecostal ministers and their wives from all

over Indiana. They spent the evening attempting to persuade us that if you were baptized in the Spirit you had to be speaking in tongues. We let them know we were open to praying in tongues, but we held fast to the conviction that we were already baptized in the Spirit because we could see it in our lives. The issue got resolved because we were willing to speak in tongues if it were not seen as a theological necessity to being baptized in the Holy Spirit. At a certain point we said we were willing give it a try, and a man explained to us what was involved. Very late that evening, sometime after midnight, down in that basement room, the brothers lined us up on one side of the room and the ministers on the other side of the room, and they began to pray in tongues and walk toward us with outstretched hands. Before they reached us, many of us began to pray and sing in tongues.^{»xxxviii}

The charismatic movement became the fastest growing movement in the Catholic church. An international conference for Catholic Pentecostals began to be held at Notre Dame beginning in 1967. Attendance figures show how quickly the movement grew:

1967	85	1971	4,000
1968	150	1972	12,000
1969	450	1973	22,000
1970	1,279	1974	30,00 ^{xxxix}

We can only imagine what would have happened if the Catholic church had closed itself off to this Protestant phenomenon.

Pentecostalism and the ecumenical movement

The Pentecostal/charismatic movement has a reciprocal relationship with the ecumenical movement. First, the ecumenical movement fostered the spread of the Pentecostal spirit. To the extent that the spirit of ecumenism dictated the decisions of Vatican II, it opened the door for the spirit to enter that church. But among the Protestant churches, ecumenism has fostered a cross-pollination between denominations and the charismatic spirit has capitalized on it.

Second, the charismatic spirit has been a powerful ecumenical tool in itself. When the charismatic spirit jumped from the Pentecostal denominations to other Protestant and Catholic churches, there was a good deal of concern among the Pentecostals as to how the Catholics, whom many considered not part of the Christian church, could share in their spirit. The Catholics, on the other hand, had a hard time coming to grips with the fact that a Protestant denomination proved to be the source of newfound devotion to their own Catholic faith. The whole thing was somewhat of an embarrassment to both.

The only real answer to the dilemma was an ecumenical mindset by both parties. Both sides were forced to acknowledge that they shared the same spirit and therefore were part of God's church. Both were forced to some extent to affirm the doctrines and practices of the other. While the Pentecostal/charismatic spirit has not solved doctrinal matters or issues of church polity, it has provided a powerful common ground of fellowship between members of many denominations. Charismatics must be ecumenical; there is no way around it.

Just how much the charismatic spirit has influenced the non-charismatic segment of the ecumenical movement is hard to say. However, many charismatics look to the time when their spirit will infect the church totally and will provide the "glue" to hold the various churches and denominations together.

Charles Parham wrote the following in 1902, four years before Asuza Street:

Unity is not to be accomplished by organization or non-organization. Unity by organization has been tried for 1900 years and failed. Unity by non-organization has been tried for several years and resulted in anarchy, or gathered [sic] in small “cliques” with an unwritten creed and regulations which are often fraught with error and fanaticism. . . We expect to see the time, when baptized by the Holy Ghost into one Body, the gloriously redeemed Church [is] without spot or wrinkle, having the same mind, judgement, and speaking the same things.^{xi}

When Catholics began to receive the charismatic spirit, many thought they would be leaving the Catholic church in droves. Nothing like that happened. Walter J. Hollenweger, a leading liberal Pentecostal ecumenist, writes,

Thus Peter Hocken sees the uniqueness of the charismatic renewal in the fact that for the first time since the Reformation, an ecumenical grass-roots movement has emerged which has crossed the frontiers between evangelicals and Catholics. This indeed is of great significance. The basis of this ecumenical approach is the fact the Christians have discovered a common experience which is at the heart of their spirituality—and this in spite of their differing theologies and interpretations of this experience.^{xii}

When looking for signs of ecumenism, we should look closely at what the charismatic spirit has done. While it has not established ecumenism in its classic sense, it has supplied all churches with something in common that has created a real sense of oneness among those who have experienced the baptism.

Understanding and Ministering to a Pentecostal or Charismatic

What is the “baptism of the spirit”?

We begin answering this question by underlining what we have just said. The Pentecostal/charismatic spirit is an ecumenical spirit, equally at home in many different theological settings. While it arose primarily in a Methodist-holiness context, it can find itself at home in the Episcopalian church, the Methodist church, the Lutheran church, the Baptist church, the Catholic church, and all others. It is not a spirit that comes through a message, but through being in the presence of others who have it.

At this point I must become anecdotal. When I was asked to prepare this paper, I accepted the assignment, but I have been apprehensive about writing it, knowing that to do it justice would mean sharing some personal experiences that others may not understand. However, I ask you to consider this analysis the next time you are called to work with a Pentecostal or charismatic person, or with one who has been influenced by or is tempted to join the movement.

Some years ago I enrolled in a program at Fuller seminary in order to try to understand the Church Growth movement. The program called for three intensive sessions. They only offered two sessions in Church Growth, so I had to choose another from their list of topics. At the time our Synod was talking about renewal, and Fuller offered a course entitled “The Life and Renewal of the Parish.” I thought I would take it to find out what the Evangelicals taught about renewal.

I was rather green at that time. When I heard that Fuller was an Evangelical seminary, I assumed it would have a general “Billy Graham” type of atmosphere. Although quite a few of the books we had to read in advance of that class dealt with charismatic renewal, many of them were of a general nature. The course had been taught by David Watson who had died the previous year, and was now being taught by a John Finney, the evangelism advisor to an

Anglican bishop in England. When I arrived on campus I was still clueless about the nature of the class.

On the first day I found out that renewal meant charismatic renewal. Watson was a leading charismatic teacher in the United States and Finney was one of the main charismatic renewal leaders in Great Britain. The class was composed of 39 charismatics and one non-charismatic, me. My roommate was the charismatic leader of the Uniting Church in Australia. The purpose of the class was for pastors to learn how to lead their churches as gently as possible to become charismatic. The teacher began by dividing the 40 students into groups of four, who were supposed to support each other during the coming weeks. We immediately were told to form circles and begin praying. A worship service was scheduled for each day, lead by a team of musicians, actors, and dancers.

To make a long story short, during the two weeks I learned intimately what the charismatic person receives in his or her so-called baptism of the spirit. Although I did not give in to the spirit, it became part of me. I was forced to chew on it but the Lord graciously kept me from swallowing it. Yet chewing on it gave me an appreciation and a healthy fear of its power and its appeal.

Charismatics often speak about letting the spirit come out of you and bubble up in speaking in tongues or other phenomena. Some of them find themselves being able to perform miracles. Some receive the gift of prophecy. They delight in some of the more offbeat manifestations, such as holy laughter.

There is no doubt in my mind that if I would have given into this spirit it would have come out in one or more of those manifestations. However, the most appealing thing about this spirit was the feeling of spiritual euphoria that it provided. When you hear a charismatic person say "I've found it!" you can be quite sure that he or she has found "it."

Sooner or later all of us will have to work with people who have experienced the Pentecostal or charismatic spirit, particularly if we are called to areas where there is a large population of them. Our missionaries in many of the third-world countries are being challenged by this spirit. What posture should a confessional Lutheran pastor take toward such people, and how should he minister to them? Let me offer a few observations. On some points you will have to judge for yourselves whether you accept my conclusions, but at least this will give you a starting place for your own thinking.

At heart this is not emotionalism. There certainly is a good deal of emotionalism connected with the movement, but its basic impulse goes much deeper. At heart is a real spirit, as real as the Holy Spirit, but far different. When we think of people getting this spirit we often have visions of revival meetings or church services where everyone is singing and swaying and the preacher is getting everyone excited. But that is only one side of the movement. Much of the spread of the spirit happens in quiet, private gatherings. Think of the Notre Dame students' experience, or even that of Agnes Ozman who first received the spirit when Charles Parham laid his hands on her. Some even receive this spirit when they are alone, usually after having been in the company of others who have it.

This spirit can be spread in the calmest of circumstances. The class of charismatics I was in at Fuller looked no different than a typical Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary summer quarter class. There was no public speaking in tongues and any exercise of healing gifts was done one-on-one in private meetings. Yet the spirit in the room was, as they say, so thick you could cut it with a knife.

This spirit is one that can be laid over one's present religion. This is very important to keep in mind when dealing with a Pentecostal or charismatic, especially a charismatic. This fact became clear in our study of the history of the movement. The fact that this spirit can move from classical Pentecostal denominations into other Protestant denominations and even into the Catholic church shows that it does not come from a church's teaching. The fact that many fringe groups such as the unitarian Pentecostals and many radical sects in the third world (such as the Kimbanguist church of Africa, which was not even allowed into the World Council of Churches!) underscores this point.

Contrast this with what Paul said in Galatians 3:2, "I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law or by believing what you heard?" The Galatians received the Holy Spirit by believing the gospel about Jesus Christ. The opposite is true of the charismatic spirit. It is a spirit compatible with any number of religions, many of which do not teach the gospel of Christ. Accordingly, it is not the true Spirit who comes into our hearts when we believe the gospel.

Some things to do and not do when working with a Pentecostal or charismatic

If you grant the premise that the charismatic spirit is a spirit other than the Holy Spirit, and can be laid over anyone's religion, the whole matter becomes rather simple to understand. To understand and work with a charismatic person is not theological rocket science. A Lutheran pastor who understands the law and the gospel is eminently suited to minister to such a person. Working with such a person is no different than working with anyone from a non-charismatic religion, with one exception. The charismatic has received a very powerful spirit and may have seen some very amazing things. Since the charismatic has received this spirit—which he believes to be the Holy Spirit—he is likely to consider you one of the unenlightened, and you have two strikes against you right away. If you can, don't let that bother you.

When the charismatic person sits down with you, realize that he has this spirit that has been laid over whatever religion he had before becoming a charismatic. His religion—what he believes—and not the charismatic overlay, is the most important part of this person's life, and ultimately it is this you will want to focus on. In short, find out if the person has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him or not. Of course that is simple. Ask the person the same questions you would ask anyone with whom you are talking. Does this person know he is a sinner and know that Christ died for his sins? Does he know he is saved by grace alone? Just because a charismatic person has the charismatic spirit does not mean he cannot have God's Holy Spirit dwelling in him. If he is a believer, then you deal with him as a Christian and attempt to strengthen his hold on the gospel.

If the person has not been converted, however, then that is where you must start. At this point the tragedy of the charismatic movement becomes apparent. There are those who have received this spirit, and because of how wonderful they feel and because of the phenomena they have witnessed, they think they are Christians even though they don't know or believe the basics about Christ. What's more, their *experience as a Catholic or as a member the Episcopal church* or some other church, in their minds puts God's stamp of approval on whatever that church believes. So, stick with the basics of sin and grace. The charismatic Christian will respect you for it, and the charismatic non-Christian needs the true Spirit to work on his heart through the law and gospel.

There comes a point, however, when you must express your posture toward their spirit. If you don't, they will think you are completely ignorant and may close themselves off to whatever else you have to say. First let's note a few don'ts.

Don't assume the charismatic person is a "holy roller" type. Don't assume that this person's church engages in the kind of excesses that were present in the early history of the movement. Many modern Pentecostal services are quite controlled and most attempt to practice decency and order as Saint Paul instructed. Also, a charismatic from one of the mainline churches will have his spirit tempered by the customary practices of his church. If there are excesses in this person's church, don't judge the movement by the excesses. What church or movement is free from excesses, including the Lutheran church?

Don't use 1 Corinthians 12-14 to instruct the charismatic. Those chapters were written to instruct the Christians on how to use the true gifts of God, which has been imparted by the true Spirit of God. You cannot use words written to help Christians use the true Spirit to help them tailor the use of the false spirit. As soon as you begin using those verses, you are admitting to them that you agree that their "gifts" are from God. Any thinking Pentecostal or charismatic will stop talking to you at that point, since you have just confessed that their spirit is true but you have no desire to share in that spirit with them. The one thing that helped me the most when I was struggling with this spirit is those chapters. What I saw this spirit doing did not agree with those chapters or with the rest of Scripture.

Don't assume the person is exaggerating when he tells you what he has experienced or seen. This is a very powerful spirit who is able to imitate what the Holy Spirit does. Take the person's words seriously. If he says he has been healed, take him at his word. If he says he has had a prophecy spoken about him and that it was true, believe him. At least listen without passing judgment at this point.

Don't pooh-pooh miracles as if "tough Christians don't need miracles—they can live on the Word alone." God's Word includes the testimony of miracles and makes it clear they are important to our faith. We have the miracles of Scripture that strengthened the people in the early church and continue to strengthen God's people today. And who of us has not drawn comfort from the miraculous ways the Lord has helped us in economic hardship, sickness, or personal problems? Again, just listen.

Don't start a debate about whether receiving the Spirit comes by God's grace or involves some sort of decision. You will be right about the true Spirit, but wrong about his spirit. He knows from experience that his spirit came through an act of his will. You will be talking past each other.

So what do you do? I would recommend something like this. First, listen to him without making judgments on what he is telling you. You will not be able to call into question the reality of his experience or what he has seen. He has experienced something that has filled his life with meaning and joy. He has witnessed things that seem to imitate the pattern found in the early Christian church. If you are going to err in your judgment, it is probably best to err on the side of being a little gullible.

You might want to consider trying to convince the person about two things:

- First, tell him that you are concerned because the charismatic spirit does not behave like the Holy Spirit did in the early church.
- Second, tell him that you think his spirit promises more than Scripture promises, which ultimately will have a bad effect on his faith.

In regard to the first point, express the fact that if God wanted to give the church today the same miraculous signs he gave the early Christians, you would be happy to receive them and use them. The issue is not whether God could still give the gifts of healing, glossolalia, or prophecy, but whether the Pentecostal and charismatic movements manifest the same signs and wonders as the early church did. Let the person see that you are concerned about upholding Scripture and not just putting down his experiences.

Consider some of the following points. Regarding miracles: When Jesus and the apostles performed miracles, they were always successful. On the other hand, healers in the Pentecostal movement have anything but a 100% success rate. It is a matter of “let’s try and see what happens.” Sometimes there is a cure. Sometimes not. Sometimes the cure is partial or temporary. That is the best that spirit can do.

Regarding speaking in tongues: The Pentecostal movement in general, and many in the charismatic movement believe one must “speak in tongues” as a sign of having received the Spirit. Remember that this was the original premise on which this movement was based. Their entire practice of tongues goes against Scripture. The early Pentecostal movement believed that tongues were foreign languages and new disciples expected the ability to speak in foreign languages. However, as time went on, tongues became a praise language, a language that was not one of the world’s know languages. If you accept that glossolalia in Scripture always refers to speaking in foreign languages unknown to the speaker, then the Pentecostal spirit immediately comes up short.

However, a more basic way in which modern glossolalia departs from Scripture is in the role it plays in faith. Nowhere does Scripture say that people must speak in tongues to prove they have received the Spirit. The Scripture puts it this way: How do we know we have the Holy Spirit? “The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are sons of God.” Along with that witness comes the joy of being one of God’s people.

The Pentecostal/charismatic spirit, however, turns this around. There is not a spirit that comes from a message, but a spirit that is transmitted from one person or group that has it to another. Think of how the Notre Dame students received it from the Assemblies of God ministers. If the spirit is transmitted in this way, it becomes problematic in the Pentecostal’s mind how to determine whether someone has received it or not. Confessing Christ and living in the joy of the gospel is not enough. Considering the powerful nature of the spirit and its removal from the realm of objective faith in Christ, it becomes almost imperative that some outward sign prove its presence. Speaking in tongues is a good way to prove it. It just comes bubbling out of a person. Some get it right away. Some have to struggle to get it. But once you’ve got it, it is clear that you have the charismatic spirit. The goal is to point out to the charismatic that such a process and such a use of tongues is foreign to Scripture.

Regarding prophecy: Prophecy in Scripture revolved around an objective word. A New Testament prophet would receive a revelation directly from God, but apart from a few examples of God revealing specific future events, prophet revelations seem to have revolved around instruction and encouragement—things that could be objectively weighed against Scripture. Prophesying in the Pentecostal/charismatic movement does not fit that pattern. It is full of prophecies that contain some truth, much ambiguity, and much falsehood. For example, Assemblies of God minister David Wilkerson predicted “in a vision great persecutions for the Catholic Pentecostals which would force them to abandon their church.”^{xliii} Clearly that vision did not come true. When I was at Fuller I soon realized I could not join the daily charismatic worship services even as an observer. So I left and spent the time in the library, which was

across a commons areas and provided a view into the lecture hall. At lunch on Friday of the first week of study my roommate informed me that there was prophecy at the service. One of the worship leaders prophesied that “one of the members of the class is not with us.” I can still remember the hair standing up on the back of my neck. He went on to say, however, that one of the class members went to seek counseling after the service, confessing that he was not in tune with the spirit of the group as he would like. I still think the prophecy was about me, but it was so ambiguous that someone else felt burdened by it. This kind of prophecy, so prevalent in charismatic circles, does not fit the pattern of the early church.

The same observations could be made about other phenomena such as casting out demons and interpreting tongues. Special mention should be made about phenomena that were not found in the early church, but which are common in the Pentecostal/charismatic movement (and in the more radical revival movements in the 17th and 18th centuries as well). This includes barking, falling down as if dead, jerking, weeping, laughing, and other phenomena. Even the charismatic Vineyard fellowship disassociated itself from the Vineyard church in Toronto, Canada because the latter church was engaging in “holy laughter.” Yet many Pentecostals and charismatics accept such phenomena as true signs of the Holy Spirit’s presence. And that it emanates from their spirit is a further sign that their spirit is not God.

The sections of Scripture that Pentecostals and charismatics appeal to as the pattern of the New Testament church, (that should be followed today) are the sections that condemn their movement the most. Their spirit has not produced a church that imitates the early New Testament church.

At the heart of our concern with the Pentecostal/charismatic movement, however, is the second of the two points made above—what it does to the faith of those who buy into it. The movement makes more promises than God has given the New Testament church. Nowhere does he promise that he will give any Christian this or that specific gift. While Christ has overcome sin with all its, consequences, Scripture never promises that God will lift all of sins’ consequences from us *in this life*. Yet that is what many Pentecostals and charismatics claim God promises. And when their members do not receive these blessings they can do nothing except doubt that Christ has taken away their sins. Or it leads them to some form of work-righteousness.

When you are dealing with a charismatic, remember that you are dealing with someone who has set himself up for a spiritual fall. If Christ’s death implies that He will make full use of his power in ridding the world of the affects of sin in this present era, the charismatic will someday wonder whether his God is really as powerful as he was told. If Christ’s death implies that he will heal all our diseases here and now (if only we believe) the charismatic will someday come to doubt his faith.

This is something only God can lead the charismatic person to see. You are fortunate if the Pentecostal or charismatic person has drawn this conclusion himself. But if he has not, at least you can plant the seeds that someday will bear fruit when he begins a more careful analysis of his religion. Charismatics are not bad people. They are just natural Pharisees like the rest of us. Many have been brought up in moralistic and often secularized churches, and are yearning for something more. They want to be renewed in a desire to serve the Lord. In the charismatic spirit they have found what they are looking for. This spirit has given them the power to be very religious.

Eventually, however, the old problems and pet sins return. Don Matzat, a Missouri Synod pastor who had spent a number of years in the charismatic movement writes,

The major shortcoming visible within the charismatic renewal, at least in the eyes of those who occupy positions of leadership has been the lack of sanctification, stability, and maturity in the lives of those who have otherwise experienced the reality of the movement. While many have entered into the charismatic dimension through the renewal experience, not all have become genuinely committed, matured, stabilized, useful members of the body of Christ. Behavior problems which plagued Christians prior to their renewal experience do not seem to go away. In many cases, changed lives resulting from the renewal experience have been temporary. The old problems, hang-ups, and habits have a way of sticking up their ugly heads again and again. Many people within the renewal seemingly live on a spiritual roller coaster. Unable to shake the problems of the sinful flesh, their experience is up one day and down the next. Immorality, divorce, anger, broken relationship, lack of forgiveness, worry, and fear are still being named among the charismatics, hindering the movement from accomplishing the goal of producing maturity, stability and committed relationship among the people of God. This has produced much disillusionment and disappointment among charismatics.^{xliii}

I do not offer this quotation to criticize Pentecostals or charismatics, for what church is not plagued by the problems Matzat describes. I offer it as encouragement to those who are dealing with charismatics. Below all the spiritual bravado lies a simple person who is a sinner and needs to know he is forgiven. We have a message that offers far more than the charismatic spirit, and the charismatic soul who is brought to your doorstep may be ready to hear what you have to say.

In a remarkably candid statement regarding the charismatic movement, David Barrett writes,

“They do, however, have a growing dilemma in that charismatics in the non-Pentecostal mainline Protestant and Catholic churches experience an average involvement of only two or three years. After this period as active weekly attenders at prayer meetings, these become irregular or nonattending... This “revolving door syndrome” results in an enormous annual turnover, a serious problem that has not yet begun to be adequately recognized or investigated.” (Note the large number of “postcharismatics” in Barrett’s statistics.)^{xliv}

Judging from these statistics, and from Matzat’s observations, some of us may be called on to minister to a fair number of charismatics who have dropped out of the movement or drifted from it. Many of these people have not been blessed with the message of sin and grace, and we cannot fault them for believing that the powerful spirit they have experienced is the Holy Spirit. But when they find that their newfound spirit does not really represent the kingdom of God and that their soul is still burdened with sin and guilt, the comfort of Scriptural Lutheranism can be a wonderful thing.

It is a real temptation to go to one of two extremes in dealing with charismatics. One is to feel inferior because of the “life” the charismatic displays and the “power” he claims he possesses. The second is to shrug the whole thing off as so much emotionalism. In my opinion, when dealing with a charismatic, one must be quite comfortable in his own Lutheran theology and know that the message of sin and grace is the only doorway to eternal hope and the Holy Spirit’s presence. He must also be aware of the powerful spirit that person has received and be able to look beyond it to the basic person inside whose only hope for real comfort is the gospel.

In conclusion, work with a charismatic as you work with anyone else. When a charismatic confesses the gospel, rejoice with him and help him avoid the problems associated

with his other spirit. When he expresses doubts, counsel him with God's grace. And if it is clear he doesn't know the gospel, share it with him.

PostScript: An Interview With a Brazilian Missionary

The majority of charismatics can be found in third world countries. Sometimes when reading about the growth of the Pentecostal/charismatic movement in South America, you get the impression the whole continent is being overrun by them. Out of curiosity for what it is like working in South America, I arranged an e-mail interview with one of our missionaries in Brazil, Bruce Marggraf. Below are the questions I asked and Pastor Marggraf's answers.

What challenges do confessional Lutheran missionaries face in South America? "South America is still vastly Roman Catholic. The latest statistic I saw for Brazil is that 85% of the people still confess loyalty to Rome. The hold is slowly weakening, however. Ten years ago the statistic was 90%. Unfortunately, the shift has not been toward the Scriptures, but rather farther away. And the charismatic movement has been largely responsible for the shift, with Spiritism in second place. Most are indifferent to our church, in fact, to Jesus himself. Warnings about eternal condemnation are met with scoffing. Devout Catholics believe that their religion has all the advantages because of the help that the Virgin can give. Those who have experience in the Charismatic movement believe that studying Scripture is boring and not important to someone's faith. These reflections are made as a result of witnessing to many, many people in Brazil."

How large is the Pentecostal/charismatic community in your area? "Here are the stats from the survey made by the Federal University in Porto Alegre on the 28th of July of this year. They were reported in the newspaper, Zero Hora, on Sunday, August 8, pages 50-53, with a front-page headline, and they cover the city of Porto Alegre and its suburbs. 444 people were interviewed for the survey. 95.7% believe in God, 4.3% do not. 84.4% follow a religion, 15.6% do not. Of those who follow a religion, 66% follow Roman Catholicism, 10.1% follow a Pentecostal/charismatic religion, 7.9% follow Spiritism, 3.4% follow a Protestant religion, 2.2% follow some type of African-Brazilian spiritist religion, and the rest follow others. Of those who follow Roman Catholicism, 73.6% prefer the traditional church, 19.6% prefer the charismatic renewal brand of Catholicism, 3.4% prefer Liberation Theology. In the past ten years, 12.8% changed religions. 35.3% changed to "higher" Spiritism, 25.5% changed to Roman Catholicism, 17.6% changed to the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches, 5.9% changed to Jehovah's Witnesses, 3.9% changed to Protestantism, 2.0% changed to the African-Brazilian "lower" Spiritism religion, and 9.8% changed to others. Here in the south of Brazil, even if you include the Catholic charismatics, it includes no more than 12% of the people. It gets more headlines, though, than other religions because it does things that tickle people's ears. Perhaps in the rest of Brazil it is a little stronger, but I think on the whole there aren't more than 15% or so in the country who have been taken in by it."

How does the Pentecostal/charismatic movement spread in your area? "I suppose the main way the movement spreads is by word of mouth invitations from friend to friend, neighbor to neighbor, etc. But that doesn't mean there aren't other ways. There are radio stations run by the Assemblies of God churches and some of the other charismatic groups. One rather new Brazilian charismatic church owns its own television station. Every so often all the charismatics get together, rent the city soccer stadium and have a revival (there are many parallels between the American revival movement and the Brazilian charismatic movement)."

How does the gospel fare in these groups? How would you describe their theology in general? “I have seen the whole gamut, although in general it may be said that the voice of the gospel has been very covered up. At a Christian and Missionary Alliance church service I saw a very orderly service with a sermon, which had no gospel. However, I heard the pure gospel in one of the songs that the people sang. After the sermon everyone prayed in tongues; it sounded like bees buzzing. At a Catholic charismatic Bible study I went to, a woman gave a very deep doctrinal lesson about the Lord’s Supper; she discussed transubstantiation and other aspects of Roman doctrine concerning the Lord’s Supper, and she was very well informed and prepared. Afterwards the group split into smaller groups to pray in tongues for each other. This time I heard no gospel at all.

“I have had many students from the Assemblies of God churches, and most of them came to me knowing the gospel. One of our members was converted to Christianity by her maid, who was a member of an Assemblies of God church (she came to our church because her parents forbade her to continue going to the Assemblies of God church). The Assemblies of God churches, however, do not offer a doctrinal Bible study as we do, which explains why I have received students from their churches.

“I observed a Brazilian charismatic group once while I was waiting for a bus, the God Is Love Pentecostal Church, which is pretty big in the larger Brazilian cities. The whole service had the minister asking questions like, ‘Who needs a job?’ calling the people who raised their hands to the stage, then putting his hands on their heads and casting out the “demons” who were causing the problem, be it headaches, family troubles, or whatever. The Bible was not mentioned once, there was no singing or Scripture or gospel or prayers, but many of the women who went to the front supposedly fainted when the minister cast out the “demons”. The fastest growing charismatic group besides the Catholic faction is the Kingdom of God Universal Church, started by its bishop, a Brazilian named Edir Macedo. Although it has been plagued by scandals, it continues to draw in thousands all over the big cities of Brazil. It owns its own television station and is known for its promises of miracles, its “very powerful prayers”, and its very heavy push for money. I have watched their television station several times. Never once did I hear a word of Scripture quoted. Only testimonial after testimonial about how the church solved their financial or family or health or drug problems.”

What has been your personal experience in working with Pentecostals and charismatics? “I have had many experiences, but I have never succeeded in convincing even one to join our church. However, I have converted many of them who weren’t Christians and helped many others to understand better their Christian faith and be more certain and comforted by it. Unfortunately, because they have always either continued in their charismatic churches, I can’t say whether they have continued as Christians. One lady from an Assemblies of God church, upon studying 1 Corinthians 14 with me, accused me of committing the sin against the Holy Spirit because I refused to ask for the gift of speaking in tongues. I have been accused of many things, but that was a first. I made myself calm down and taught her what Jesus said about that sin.

“A man came into our church with a problem and I counseled with him for over an hour. He was a member of an Assemblies of God church. He was a Christian, but a very depressed one. He told me he had tried for years to speak in tongues, that all his Christian brothers and sisters were able to speak in tongues, but he just couldn’t do it. His pastor had been telling him for years to pray harder, to have more faith, but nothing seemed to work. He asked me what to do. He cried as he asked me. We talked about Jesus’ cross and resurrection, and what that really

meant for a Christian. He really seemed to be comforted and strengthened in his faith. I invited him to come back, but he never did.

“There are many ways that the Charismatic movement is a threat to the confessional Lutheran church’s survival: The first and most obvious is that it does not emphasize the message of the gospel. It can be heard occasionally, and it still converts people, but it gets covered up by a lot of other things. The second is that it even de-emphasizes the hearing of God’s Word. The Bible is not the basis for faith and life in the Charismatic church here in Brazil. Power and emotion or even a life free from suffering become the basis for faith and life. A third problem is that there is little or no repentance preached or demanded in many Charismatic churches. Commitment, long-term life commitment, is lacking. Most people wouldn’t say they are members of a charismatic church. They usually say “I go to a Charismatic church” rather than “I belong to a Charismatic church”. Even basic morality is pretty much ignored. A fourth problem is that it spreads indifference to religion. It’s fine to promise miracles and get a person to believe in them, but what happens when the Lord doesn’t permit that person’s life to keep going smoothly? ‘Well, I tried something other than Catholicism, I guess it didn’t work. Now what do I do? Better to practice my religion at home.’ The more these problems spread, the harder it is for a confessional Lutheran church to survive.

“There is one way that the charismatic movement has helped our mission work here. It has made a dent in Roman Catholicism. I’m pretty sure that I would have had fewer opportunities to present the gospel if I had been a missionary a generation ago, before some cracks in the Roman Catholic wall began to appear. Although people in general have only drifted farther away from the Bible in the charismatic movement than they were in Roman Catholicism, the more Rome’s hold on Brazilians weakens, the more opportunity confessional Christian missionaries will have to witness to their faith and attract people to the gospel. The real problem is that we are in the Antichrist’s kingdom, and Paul explains to us how that kingdom got established, “they refused to love the truth.” In general, it can be said that you don’t have to love the truth any more in the Brazilian charismatic movement than you did when you followed Rome. People have gone from the Antichrist to antichrists. It is very difficult to do mission work in a country where everyone thinks they are Christians but only a few really are.

“I have been privileged to witness the power of the gospel many times. The gospel is a much more forceful power than anything that the charismatic movement has, be it music, TV and radio shows, miracle promises or whatever. It is this power that always will make Christian missionary work successful.”

In the end, only by growing in our understanding of sin and forgiveness can we grow in our understanding of Pentecostals and charismatics and be able to serve them effectively.

ⁱ There is no consistency in what this movement is called. Following David Barratt, we view it as a single movement with two major segments: The Pentecostal side is the earliest and most structured part. The spirit of the Pentecostal movement spilled over into other established churches. This part, called the charismatic movement or the renewal movement, is less structured and defined. In this paper we will refer to the movement as the Pentecostal/charismatic movement. That term could be plural. Sometimes we will speak about the Pentecostal movement or the charismatic movement when referring to one part or the other, or for simplicity’s sake.

ⁱⁱ Vincent Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), p. xi.

ⁱⁱⁱ Synan, pp. xi, x.

^{iv} Burgess, et al., *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), p. 818.

^v The divisions listed here represent those that will be covered in this paper. For a more complete classification see the article “Statistics, global,” in the *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, pp. 810-830.

^{vi} Burgess, et al., p. 821.

^{vii} Burgess, et al., pp. 812, 813.

^{viii} Synan, p. 281. Now quoting actual 1995 statistics.

^{ix} David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, (January, 1999) “Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 1999, pp. 24, 25. Concerning these statistics, Kate McGinn, the archivist at the David du Plessis Archives at Fuller Seminary, wrote in response to my inquiry, “While a good source, I reference the numbers with some caution. It seems unclear, for instance, whether charismatics are counted twice—as both charismatics and whatever other affiliation they may have. Mel Robeck, who often speaks on the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements world-wide usually lists membership of the two groups at about 300 million.”

^x Burgess, et al., p. 811.

^{xi} Ibid.

^{xii} Ibid.

^{xiii} Burgess, et al., p. 810.

^{xiv} Synan, p. 9.

^{xv} Synan, p. 24.

^{xvi} Synan, p. 25 (Quoting from the call to the churches to attend the camp meeting, which was to be held at Vineland, New Jersey, July 17-26, 1867.)

^{xvii} Synan, p. 25.

^{xviii} Synan, p. 43.

^{xix} Synan, p. 43.

^{xx} Synan, p. 52.

^{xxi} Synan, p. 59.

^{xxii} Synan, p. 90. Synan references Parham, *Charles Fox Parham*, p. 48 and Brumbach, *Suddenly from Heaven*, p. 21.

^{xxiii} Synan, p. 96.

^{xxiv} Synan, p. 100.

^{xxv} Synan, pp. 133-142.

^{xxvi} Synan, p. 156.

^{xxvii} Synan, p. 160.

^{xxviii} Synan, p. 205.

^{xxix} Synan, p. 226.

^{xxx} Synan, p. 223.

^{xxxi} Synan, p. 224.

^{xxxii} Synan, p. 229.

^{xxxiii} Synan, p. 232.

^{xxxiv} Synan, p. 233.

^{xxxv} Synan, p. 244.

^{xxxvi} We don't mean to give the impression that Vatican II was the sole reason for the Catholic church's openness to the charismatic movement. Synan says, "In some ways the phenomenon of Catholic Pentecostalism was an unexpected and miraculous event, but a closer study shows that there were many developments over a longer period of time that prepared the ground for Pentecostalism in the Roman church." (p. 237) He then refers to Edward O'Connor's *Aspects of Pentecostal Charismatic Origins*, for the "hidden roots" of the movement. Vatican II was in some respects the final link in a chain that began already in the 1800s.

^{xxxvii} Synan, p. 246.

^{xxxviii} Synan, pp. 247, 248.

^{xxxix} Synan, p. 250.

^{xl} Walter Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Development Worldwide*, (Peabody, Mass., Hendrickson, 1997), p. 348.

^{xli} Hollenweger, p. 163.

^{xlii} Hollenweger, p. 168.

^{xliii} Donald Matzat, *Inner Healing*, (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 1987), p. 24.

^{xliv} Burgess, et al, p. 811. Statistics on "Post-charismatics" quoted in Synan, p. 286.