

THE PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Beginning around 1900, Pentecostalism developed as a movement until the 1950's when it began to impact non-Pentecostal mainline denominations, evangelicals, and Roman Catholics. And what has become known as the Neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic movement has continued to mushroom since that time. Although there are some differences, this paper will attempt to deal with both movements together as one.

The Pentecostal-Charismatic movement “has penetrated deeply into all 150 major Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox traditions.”¹ Probably most of those identified as “evangelicals” would now also be identified with the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement.² They may number in excess of 523,767,000³ worldwide or about one-third of all “Christians.” Many who have become a part of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement are sincere fellow-believers who love the Lord. Both charismatic and non-charismatic believers have much in common. This paper will highlight some problems with the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement *doctrinal distinctives*⁴ and *underlying assumptions*.

A. SOME DOCTRINAL DISTINCTIVES OF THE PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

1. Baptism in/by/of/with the Holy Spirit — Many followers of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement would have similar views to those expressed in the Assemblies of God doctrinal statement about Spirit baptism. It reads: “All believers... should... earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire... This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth.”⁵ What is often called the “full gospel” in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement includes this “*doctrine of subsequence*” or *experience* of the “second blessing.”

In contrast, Scripture indicates that all believers since Pentecost (Acts 2) are baptized by the Holy Spirit “into Christ” (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 3:27) or “into the one body” of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) when by faith they place their trust in Christ’s redemptive work. There are no other conditions. And there is no other Spirit baptism. Simultaneous with

¹ Vinson Synan and Ralph Rath, *Launching the Decade of Evangelization*, (South Bend, IN: North American Renewal Service Committee, 1990), 56.

² The largest denomination in the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), the Assemblies of God with 32 million members and adherents worldwide, is only one of many Pentecostal denominations in that organization. <http://ag.org/top/about/who.cfm>

³ David Barrett (Regent University) and Todd Johnson (YWAM) — Global Evangelization Movement. Source: *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, January 2000. [<http://www.gem-werc.org>] Barrett’s 1990 figure was listed as 372,651,000 and included some 33,000,000 “third-wavers” who, “for one reason or another, do not personally wish to identify with either the Pentecostals or the Charismatics” although they practice “power encounter evangelism” with signs and wonders. [C. Peter Wagner, “On the Cutting Edge,” *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 536 and Synan and Rath, *Launching the Decade of Evangelization*, 56-57].

⁴ It is difficult to be very specific in defining all the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement *doctrine* because the cohesive element has to do so much with *experience*.

⁵ <http://ag.org/top/about/truths.cfm#7>

this Spirit baptism, every believer *is born of* the Spirit (Jn. 3:5-6), *is indwelt by* the Spirit, (Rom. 8:9) and *is sealed by* the Spirit (Eph. 4:30). The believer *is led by* the Spirit (Rom. 8:14), *has the witness of* the Spirit (Rom. 8:16) and is admonished to “be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18). The baptism of the Spirit is not “distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth.” There are no Scriptural exhortations or commands for believers to “be baptized” in/by the Spirit or to “earnestly seek” the baptism of the Spirit.

2. Filling of/with the Spirit — Many in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement believe that the *filling* “with the Spirit” is essentially the same as the *baptism* “with the Spirit” because both phrases are used to describe what God did at Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 2:4). In contrast, most non-charismatics understand that since Pentecost (Acts 2), the “filling of the Spirit” differs from the “baptism of the Spirit.” The “baptism of the Spirit” is an unrepeatable act that God does in the believer only at the time of his/her conversion, and the “filling of the Spirit” is an ongoing activity of God in/for the life of the believer yielded by faith unto Him. The latter is more for the believer’s walk, work, and warfare.

Prior to Pentecost some believers were filled with (never baptized in/by) the Spirit (Luke 1:41, 67).⁶ Others were filled with (not baptized in/by) the Spirit *after* their original Spirit baptism (Acts 4:8, 31, 13:9). In some Old Testament dispensations the Spirit *came upon* (Judges 14:6; 1 Sam. 10:10), *filled* (Ex. 31:3, 35:31) or even *indwelt* (Num. 27:18) special individuals at special times for special service.

But since Pentecost believers, although baptized/indwelt by the Spirit like those in Corinth (1 Cor. 6:19-20), are commanded to “be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18) who enables us to glorify God in our bodies. It is thus possible for us to “walk in the Spirit and... not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16). The “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal.5:22-23, 1 Cor. 13) is simply Christ living His life in us (Gal. 2:20, Phil. 2:13). To be filled with the Spirit is to “abide in Christ,” the vine (John 15:1-14), who is our life (Col. 3:3). Christ in us is “the hope of glory” Col.1:27). The Spirit-filled life is only possible by faith (Rom. 6:11; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:6).

3. Spiritual Gifts and Miraculous Signs — Those within the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement generally believe that all the spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-9, and 28-29 are for the Church today, same as in apostolic times. Some, however, acknowledge that the miraculous charismatic gifts have not been evident throughout most of church history.⁷ But they see the present Pentecostal-Charismatic movement as the fulfillment of a promised worldwide restoration of all these gifts prior to our Lord’s

⁶ John the Baptist, who apparently “did no miracle” (John 10:41) and never spoke in tongues, was the greatest prophet who ever lived (Luke 7:28), “filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb” (Luke 1:15).

⁷ An exception to this would be Roman Catholics who claim that, although the present Pentecostal-Charismatic movement is an extensive “new Pentecost” or “renewal” of the “charismata,” these miraculous gifts have always been evident in the Catholic Church. Such miracles have been claimed, particularly at numerous worldwide sacred shrines where saints, relics, icons, apparitions of Mary or the stigmata, et cetera are so revered. Now they are being claimed at Catholic charismatic cursillos and prayer meetings where those gathered practice “prophecy..., tongues (in song, praise, or prophecy); interpretation of tongues; ministering the Gifts of the Spirit to the people gathered in healing, miracles, word of knowledge, etc...” http://www.garg.com/ccc/articles/Mullins/Mullins_003.html (Based on a tract printed by the Charismatic Catholic Renewal Office, Diocese of Oakland, CA)

Second Coming.

God is still giving gifts and doing miracles today, but *not* to the same extent and in the same manner, especially through gifted “miracle workers,” as in apostolic times. This organization has taken no official position on the cessation of certain gifts.⁸ However, historically this organization’s training facilities have supported the view that those gifts referred to as “sign gifts” ceased to operate sometime after the apostolic era, around 100 AD, because their purpose as “signs” had been fulfilled. This would include tongues, interpretation of tongues, apostleship, and prophecy (as proclaiming of new revelation and foretelling of future events) and workers of miracles including miraculous healings.⁹ It seems evident that all these sign gifts involved miraculous manifestations and most involved the supernatural proclamation of new divine revelation.

Gifts involving miraculous signs were graciously given by God especially in the days of Moses and Aaron (Acts 7:36-38) and later the prophets (especially Elijah and Elisha) and finally during the days of Christ and the Apostles. The purpose for the miraculous signs was to authenticate the messenger and the divine source of his message, especially to Israel and during periods when God was giving new revelation. Apparently unbelieving Israel especially required signs (Jn. 4:48; 1 Cor. 1:22).

4. Tongues Speaking and Interpretation — From its beginning, the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement has been characterized by speaking in tongues.¹⁰ Consistent with the Assemblies of God doctrinal statement, The International Church of the Foursquare states that it “shares with the entire classical Pentecostal movement the truth of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with tongues... The Baptism in the Holy Ghost is received today in exactly the same way as on the Day of Pentecost when the hundred and twenty were filled with the Holy Ghost and spake with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”¹¹ Many, if not most, folk within the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement would express a position similar to this. By thinking that tongues are the evidence or sign of Spirit baptism, they believe that all believers should earnestly seek the experience of speaking in tongues (glossolalia). It is not uncommon for “seekers” to be instructed in various nonbiblical techniques for beginning to speak in tongues. And except for very rare, alleged instances, the tongue speaking in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement is never in contemporary foreign languages unknown to the speaker. The “language” is usually described as ecstatic or esoteric speech, a prayer language or a spiritual, angelic, or heavenly language since they are

⁸ God is free to intervene miraculously any time He desires to do so. However, the complete fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy (Joel 2:28-32b; Acts 2:17-21) will occur during the tribulation days just prior to our Lord’s return to set up His kingdom on earth.

⁹ If the two gifts of “word of knowledge” and “word of wisdom” involve new and/or prophetic revelation, as understood by many in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement then they should also be considered as sign gifts. They are commonly displayed in this way by P. Robertson and R. Roberts on TBN-TV.

¹⁰ This is verified in numerous publications by those involved in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement. Popular books include: Carl Brumback, *What Meaneth This?* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1991), John Sherrill, *They Speak With Other Tongues*, (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1964), and Edward D. O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1971).

¹¹ <http://www.foursquare.org/abouticfg/general.cfm>

“unintelligible.”

In contrast, it seems apparent that speaking in tongues is not evidence (initial or otherwise) of one’s spiritual baptism. Even in the times of the Corinthian church not all believers spoke in tongues (1 Cor. 12:29-30). It seems evident that tongues speaking in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement is not the same as that spoken on the Day of Pentecost. The “tongues” spoken in Acts 2 were known, contemporary, foreign languages unknown to the speakers (Acts 2:6-11).¹² And it seems most likely that the “tongues” in subsequent passages in Acts (10:46 and 19:6) were foreign languages as well. Peter insisted that when the Gentile believers first spoke in “tongues” they had received the Holy Spirit “just as also we *did*” at Pentecost (10:47; 11:15, 17; 15:8).

Most folk in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement do accept the fact that, though Luke in Acts may have had real languages in mind, the speaking in tongues at Corinth (1 Cor. 12-14) were not actual earthly languages. This belief is partly rooted in, and supported by, their “experience” as well as their view that the purpose for the gift of tongues is “self-edification.” The *true* Corinthian *tongues* can best be understood as the same type of *tongues* given at Pentecost, namely, real foreign languages unknown by the speakers.¹³ And in our view tongues or any other gift given to believers is given for the benefit of others, not self,¹⁴ for use in public, not private. One major theme of 1 Corinthians 14 seems to center around the author’s burden that tongues were not being used for edification of the saints.

Paul also makes it clear that the purpose of tongues was “for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers” (1 Cor. 14:21-22 NASB). His quote from Isaiah 28:11-12 may indicate that its purpose is primarily for Israel in their unbelief. The foreign language of Israel’s captors (as God’s messengers) was a symbol of God’s judgment on unbelieving Israel for their rejection of God’s prophets in their generations. This had also been prophesied by Moses (Deut. 28:49) and Jeremiah (5:15). Even so the speaking of foreign languages by God’s messengers after Pentecost was a sign of God’s judgment on unbelieving Israel for their rejection of the greater Prophet (Deut. 18:19; Jn. 1:11; Acts 2:22-23) in His generation. And as Israel was taken into captivity by those speaking a foreign language, so Israel was to be scattered into other nations speaking foreign languages. This happened during the 66-73 AD Jewish war against Rome. As a nation, Israel has been set aside and remains in blindness and unbelief “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Mt. 23:37-39; Rom. 11:25). During most of this Church age there has been no further necessity for the *sign of tongues*.

5. Apostles and Prophets — Apostles and prophets are listed as “spiritual *gifts*” (1 Cor. 12:28-29) given to individuals and as spiritually-gifted men (Eph. 4:11) given to the church. Roman Catholics (including some 72 million currently involved in the

¹² Luke uses two words interchangeably for “tongues,” *glossai* (vs. 3, 4, 11) and *dialekto* (vs. 6, 8). Both words refer to known human languages, not unknown.

¹³ It is possible that some who practiced *tongues* at Corinth were manifesting a “counterfeit/false gift” of unintelligible, ecstatic babbling similar to those groups influenced by the “mystery religions.” See John F. MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, 196-206.

¹⁴ See Eph. 4:12; 1 Cor. 12:7; 1 Pet. 4:10 — NIV, NASB.

Pentecostal-Charismatic movement)¹⁵ believe in “apostolic succession” whereby the Pope, bishops and priests are given apostolic authority through the sacrament of Holy Orders, which is “the sacrament of the apostolic ministry...” This is the basis for the power granted the Magisterium.¹⁶ Many others are firmly convinced that within the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement there has been and is a “restoration” of apostles and prophets in these last days.

A missionary, as “one sent” to plant churches, could perhaps be considered as “an apostle.”¹⁷ However, Scripture teaches that both the apostolic gift/office and the prophetic gift/office were foundational for establishing the Church (Eph. 2:20) during a time when new revelation was still being given (Eph.3:5-10). In those days “the Apostle” Himself (Heb. 3:1) gave His “apostles” special authority and miraculous ability to perform “the signs of an apostle” to authenticate their apostleship (Matt. 10:1, 8; 2 Cor. 12:11-12). The Twelve and Paul (“last of all”) were also eyewitnesses (Acts 1:22; 10:39-42; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:7-9) of the resurrected Christ.¹⁸ This sort of apostolic gift is no longer in use today because God’s purposes for the gift were fulfilled in apostolic times when Scripture was still being revealed through Divine inspiration. Some have correctly said that “There can be no modern-day apostles.”¹⁹

It would seem that the aspect of prophecy as authoritative preaching or *forthtelling* of the Word already revealed may continue to this day for the edification of the saints (Eph. 4:11).²⁰ However, the New Testament prophets, as proclaimers of new revelation and as foretellers of future events, fulfilled God’s purpose in their foundational role (Eph. 2:20). This sign-gift of prophecy as new revelation or *foretelling* of future events, (1 Cor. 12:10, 28) “has ceased.”²¹ God’s purposes for apostolic authority and revelatory prophetic ministries no longer exists. Any “word of wisdom” or “word of knowledge” as direct revelation was given to such men in fulfillment of what Jesus had promised

¹⁵ http://www.garg.com/ccc/articles/Foster/Foster_001.html [This number represents a 1990 estimate].

¹⁶ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, 857, 1576.

¹⁷ Eph. 4:11. See William S. Dillon, *God's Word in God's Way*, (Sanford, FL: Brown Gold Publications, 1987) 58-69. See also Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Church Life*, (Washington DC: International Students, Inc.) 13-24.

¹⁸ This may have been a qualification for apostleship. If so, then others such as Barnabas (Acts 14:14), Silas (1 Thess. 2:6; cf. 1:1), and Andronicus and Junia (Rom. 16:7) were possibly among the 500 (1 Cor. 15:6) and Paul would have been the last eye-witness of the resurrection to qualify (1 Cor. 15:8).

¹⁹ John F. MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, 145. See also Dr. John Walvoord, “Issues in the Doctrine of Holy Spirit — Part IV: Spiritual Gifts Today,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Oct. 1973, 318.

²⁰ See Bill Dillon, *God's Work in God's Way*, 69-72.

²¹ John Walvoord, *Ibid.*, 319. In defense of the dismal track record of some present-day prophets, John White (a former member of our organization) stated that “the Kansas City prophets are human beings. They can make, and sometimes have made, mistakes. But they are true prophets.” He writes, “Prophets can make serious mistakes. Presumably there are aspects of prophetic experience that call for training — hence prophetic schools.” He refers to the immature as “baby prophets” and states, “At first they make many mistakes.” Apparently, they are thought to improve with practice. John White, “Foreword,” xiv-xix, *Some Said It Thundered, A Personal Encounter With the Kansas City Prophets*, by D. Pytches. Such assumptions should not be accepted. False prophecies come from false prophets (Deut. 18:20-22).

His Apostles just prior to His crucifixion (Jn. 14:26; 16:12-15)²² concerning further revelation to be given them through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Such *wisdom* and *knowledge* are now contained in the Holy Scriptures which were completed just prior to John's death around 100 AD.

6. Healing and "Healing in the Atonement" — Faith healings/healers have always been a big part of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement. Their doctrinal views are largely based on verses such as Matt. 10:8; Is. 53:5 and 1 Pet. 2:24. Their view of the atonement of Christ gives them confidence that it is God's will for sick people to be completely healed now — in this present dispensation. Many in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement believe that if/since "Jesus took our sicknesses we need not bear them any longer. Sickness is part of the curse and Jesus came to destroy the curse. He suffered in our stead because He did not want us to suffer disease."²³ Other healers speak for many in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement when they state, "The Bible does not leave any doubt. It does not say some of you, or just a few of you who believe; it simply says that all those who believe are going to be able to lay hands on the sick, and the sick are going to recover."²⁴

Divine healing as taught in James 5:13-16 is certainly according to Scripture. Many both within and without the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement, believe in the physical/medical healing of the body. But any such healing is temporary because it is "appointed unto man once to die" (Heb. 9:27). The physical decay and death of all mankind is the direct result of the curse of Adam (Gen. 3:3, 19; Rom. 5:12). We are mortal creatures. That's why all of us are in the process of dying physically — including those with eternal life (Jn. 3:16), even faith healers. And death is normally the culmination of bodily deterioration called "sickness." If it were God's will to heal every illness and disease, then no one could die in God's will from such causes.

Our outward man perishes even though our inward man is renewed day by day. Our earthly house of clay is temporal and will be dissolved. That's why we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house from Heaven when that which is mortal/corruptible shall put on immortality/incorruption (2 Cor. 4:7-5:4 and 1 Cor. 15:20-57). That's when death, the last enemy, shall be swallowed up in victory and there will be "no more curse" including sickness (Rev. 20:14; 22:3). It seems evident that 1 Pet. 2:24 refers to spiritual healing.

B. SOME UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS OF THE PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

1. Failure to Maintain Dispensational Distinctives —The doctrinal distinctives of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement are often rooted in a failure to consistently interpret Scripture in light of dispensational distinctives. That is no doubt, in part, because many within the movement have an orientation in covenant theology. For instance, the failure to distinguish between Israel and the Church has led many in the Pentecostal-

²² The Holy Spirit guides us today through *illumination* of the Word already revealed, not through *inspiration* of new revelation.

²³ Oral Roberts, "Why I know that God wants to heal you," *Abundant Life*, Sept. 1976.

²⁴ Francis Hunter quoted in E. S. Caldwell, "It's the Hour of the Believer," *Charisma*, Oct. 1987, 19-24.

Charismatic movement to misapply God's OT promises of physical blessings/cursings to Israel for their obedience/disobedience. Such faulty hermeneutics has led many into the *Latter Rain movement*, the *Health and Wealth Gospel* and/or the *Word of Faith/Positive Confession* movements.

Then, too, a failure to distinguish the unique differences between the two Apostolic commissions of Matt. 10:5-15 and Matt. 28:19-20 has moved many into the *Signs and Wonders* and/or *Spiritual Warfare movements*. There has also been confusion between the synoptic Gospel of the kingdom and the Pauline Gospel of grace in the epistles. Such confusion has influenced many into amillennial/postmillennial views of *Kingdom Now* and/or other forms of Christian *Restorationist* and/or *Reconstructionist* theologies. It appears that within the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement the synoptic gospels and the book of Acts are prominent for the formulation of *doctrine* — even though they are primarily *historical* and *transitional* between two major economies.

Students of God's Word should be consistent in making proper dispensational distinctions for Biblical interpretation.²⁵ The NT epistles are foundational for church doctrine because of new revelation given to Paul and others.

2. Confidence in Extra-Biblical Revelation — Another assumption prevalent in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement is that God is still giving new revelation of truth today. Normally, within the movement, such revelation comes through the exercise of “gifts” such as tongues with interpretation, prophecies, and “word of knowledge” (KJV). Most folk involved in the movement also believe that new revelation often comes directly or through dreams, visions, and angelic visitations. Pentecostal-Charismatic movement publications, sermons and telecasts make this quite obvious. As an example the following best-selling books are highlighted, both of which concern “revelations” given to Assembly of God pastors. The first records a vision of future events revealed in the summer of 1973. The author was convinced that “this vision is from God, that it is true, and that it will come to pass.” He wrote, “If I understand divine guidance at all, God has instructed me to speak out.”²⁶ The second is mostly a record of an Assembly of God pastor's conversations with angels who had visited him on 16 different occasions, each from two to four hours.²⁷ Angels Gabriel, Michael and Chrioni were named.

God is not now giving new revelation to His people either directly or through nonbiblical writings, Popes, apostles, prophets, tongues and interpretation, word of knowledge,

²⁵ See the Biblical Resource paper on Dispensationalism vs Covenant theology.

²⁶ David Wilkerson, *The Vision, A terrifying prophecy of Doomsday that is starting to happen now* (Old Tappan NJ: Spire Books, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1974) p. 12. By 1980 this best seller was in its 16th printing. It is difficult at times to discern whether the author's words describe what he saw in the vision or how he interprets prophetic Scripture in light of current events. Much of *The Vision* could represent what other prophetic scholars were thinking at that time as well as today.

²⁷ Charles and Frances Hunter, *Angels on Assignment* (Houston TX: Hunter Books, 1979) p. 15. Roland Buck, Pastor of the Central Assembly of God Christian Life Center in Boise, Idaho, from 1950 to his death in 1979, tells his story as recorded by the Hunters. The only other eye-witness to any of these angelic visitations was Queenie, Pastor Buck's dog. He also tells of his time in “the Throne Room” where God had told him, “the secrets of the universe are kept.” There God wrote down on paper 120 prophesies of future events soon to happen and, as the pastor stated, “God also let me know that he did not want me to reveal any of these things until such time as he would release me to share them.” The paper itself turned to ashes *before* anyone else could read them. (52-70).

dreams, visions, angels, apparitions of Mary, or whatever means. Therefore we place no confidence in them. If such messages, often delivered as prophecy and in first-person singular as coming directly from God Himself, were valid, then why should they not be included in our Bibles? But God Himself made it clear concerning “the words of the prophecy in this book” that no man should add unto these things” (Rev. 22:18). The 66 books of the Bible are translations of God’s completed Word to us for this present time. They are totally sufficient “to make us wise unto salvation,” past, present and future. They are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, *that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*” (2 Tim. 3:15-17). What more revelation do we need? We are to hunger for the revelation of the Word of God we already have, one that abides forever, *that we may grow by it* (1 Pet. 1:23-2:2).

3. Experience as Foundation for Truth — In the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement there is a prominent assumption that experience is a basis for determination of doctrinal truth. A leading theologian within the movement has stated what he considers to be a fundamental thesis: “Any vital information concerning the gifts of the Spirit, the pneumatic charismata, presupposes a participation in them.”²⁸ Many years ago it was said that evangelicals were “beginning to... explore the possibility of experientially based theology... Evangelicals are suggesting that theology must travel from Spirit to Word, not from Word to Spirit, the pattern of their heritage.”²⁹

The false assumption that *experientially based theology* is legitimate is often accompanied by the false assumption that if the experience is unnatural/supernatural it must be of the Holy Spirit. Such assumptions have no doubt greatly contributed to some of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement beliefs and practices that are erroneous. This would include practices such as *slaying* in the Spirit,³⁰ *laughing* in the Spirit (ala Toronto Blessing) et cetera.

The only real foundation for doctrinal truth must come from the Bible, not experience. The fact is that *subjective experience* can be interpreted many radically different ways. Therefore, it can never serve as the foundation or anchor for *objective truth*. The blessed Holy Spirit should not be held responsible for much that goes on within the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement.

4. Spiritual Superiority through Tongues Experience — Besides a Pentecostal-Charismatic movement belief/assumption that only those who speak in tongues have the baptism of the Spirit, there is also a common assumption that only those who speak in tongues have the spiritual resources essential for a victorious Christian life. Those who *have* “the baptism” *with* the tongues experience are thus thought to be more spiritual than those *without* it. This assumption fosters a clear distinction between the *haves* and the *have nots*. Those who sincerely “hunger for righteousness” are driven to seek and

²⁸ J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 326.

²⁹ Robert K. Johnson, “Of Tidy Doctrine and Truncated Experience,” *Christianity Today*, 2/18/77, 11. Cited in John F. MacArthur, Jr., *Charismatic Chaos*, 51.

³⁰ These phenomena are often manifested on TBN-TV in the ministries of many faith healers including Benny Hinn.

get the experience with the hopeful anticipation that they will subsequently live a godlier life. The other more carnal ones, sensing their spiritual inferiority to those with the experience and longing for full acceptance, are psychologically motivated to earnestly seek “the baptism” to get out of the *have nots* category. No one enjoys being on the *outside without* the experience especially when considered to be spiritually inferior to those on the *inside with* the experience.

It is true that for many different reasons believers differ in spiritual maturity. But no Pentecostal-Charismatic movement experience necessarily leads believers to greater spiritual maturity or superiority over others, either inside or outside of the movement. Spiritual gifts are for service, not spirituality.

5. “Christians” United through Common Tongues Experience — The Pentecostal-Charismatic movement assumption that the tongues experience is evidence of the baptism of the Spirit also leads to another Pentecostal-Charismatic movement assumption that those who speak in tongues must be believers. Therefore, all who share the tongues experience must be accepted as brothers and sisters in Christ. With such assumptions it is no wonder that millions of Roman Catholics and liberals have become accepted participants in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement.³¹ It is emphasized by many that “doctrine divides but *love* unites.” Many in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement also emphasize that “doctrine divides but *experience* unites.”

Spiritual unity should be based on sound doctrine, not common charismatic experience. A present-day tongues-speaking experience cannot identify anyone as a believer. The Pentecostal-Charismatic movement has been one of the leading causes for the tremendous growth of the Ecumenical Movement³² to unite all “Christians” together as one. It appears that both movements working together could be leading “Christians” toward a one-world church under the headship of the Roman Pope.³³ Pope John Paul II consistently pursued this goal (with his blessing on the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement) since he began his Pontifical reign in 1978. The same effort toward a one-world church has continued aggressively under Pope Francis 1 since he became pope in 2013, and we can expect future popes to continue to pursue this goal.

CONCLUSION

Since the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement is such a worldwide, ecumenical movement, there are many differences among those within the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement on each of the

³¹ Some who are identified with the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement have officially taken a stand against the Ecumenical Movement. For instance, even the “General Council of the Assemblies of God disapproves of ministers or churches participating in any of the modern ecumenical organizations on a local, national, or international level in such a manner as to promote the ecumenical movement...” From “Bylaws...”, Article IX, Section 11 [Cited by Opal Reddin, “What’s wrong with Ecumenicalism”; www.pentecostal-issues.org/] The reasons given for their position are excellent as well as consistent with our own.

³² See our paper on the Ecumenical Movement.

³³ The Ecumenical Movement has possibly influenced Assembly of God Pastor Buck to fully accept the “revelation” that Number 113 of the 120 prophetic events stated that “in order to help in the restoration of his fragmented body, God had chosen a man named Karol Wojtyla [Pope John Paul II] of Poland. This prophecy was fulfilled October 16, 1978...” Hunters, *Angels on Assignment*, 70. [See footnote 28]

doctrinal distinctives and underlying assumptions discussed in this paper. Therefore, only a general description of some the common features among the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement has been presented. This organization has never been a part of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement because of concerns over these and some of the other beliefs and practices.³⁴ The issues discussed in this paper are important ones that must be seriously faced particularly in this ecumenical age in which we live.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

BOOKS:

- Donald W. Burdick, *Tongues, To Speak or Not to Speak* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969).
- Joseph Dillow, *Speaking in Tongues, Seven Crucial Questions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975).
- Thomas R. Edgar, *Miraculous Gifts: Are They for Today?* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1983).
- Robert G. Gromacki, *The Modern Tongues Movement* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1978).
- Robert Lightner, *Speaking in Tongues and Divine Healing* (Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 1978).
- Merrill F. Unger, *New Testament Teaching on Tongues* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1971).
- Peter Masters and John Whitcomb, *The Charismatic Phenomenon*, (London: The Wake-man Trust, 1982).
- John F. MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992).

ARTICLES:

- William G. Bellshaw, "The Confusion of Tongues," April 1963, pp. 145-153.
- "A Symposium on the Tongues Movement..." July 1963, pp. 224-233; Oct 1963, pp. 309-321.
- Merrill F. Unger, "The Significance of Pentecost," April 1965, pp. 169-177.
- J. Lanier Burns, "A Reemphasis on the Purpose of the Sign Gifts, July 1975, pp. 242-249.
- John F. Walvoord, "The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts," April 1986, pp. 109-122.
- Thomas R. Edgar, "The Cessation of the Sign Gifts," October 1988, pp. 371-386.

³⁴ Some "of the other" would include the widespread violation of Paul's corrective ministry regarding "spirituals" in 1 Cor.12-14, especially in the use of "tongues" and the prominent leadership roles often given to women within the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement (even in light of 1 Cor. 14:34-35).

- Ken L. Sarles, “An Appraisal of the Signs and Wonders Movement,” January 1988, pp. 56-82.
- Robert L. Thomas, “Prophecy Rediscovered? A Review of *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*” [by Wayne A. Grudem], January 1992, pp. 83-95.
- Shaun Willcock, “[Francis I and Foolish Pentecostals](#)”
- Bob Nyberg, “[The Hermeneutics of The New Apostolic Reformation](#)”
- Dr. Georgia Purdom, “[NAR—The Fastest-Growing Counter-Christian Movement Most Haven’t Heard Of](#)”
- Gary Gilley, “The New Apostolic Reformation An Examination of the Five-Fold Ministries [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)”