



THE  
CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT  
AND  
LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

A REPORT OF THE  
COMMISSION ON THEOLOGY AND CHURCH RELATIONS  
OF  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD  
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# THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT AND LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

## *Preface*

One of the significant developments in American church life during the past decade has been the rapid spread of the neo-Pentecostal or charismatic movement within the mainline churches. In the early sixties, experiences and practices usually associated only with Pentecostal denominations began to appear with increasing frequency also in such churches as the Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, and Lutheran. By the mid-nineteen-sixties, it was apparent that this movement had also spread to some pastors and congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. In certain areas of the Synod, tensions and even divisions had arisen over such neo-Pentecostal practices as speaking in tongues, miraculous healings, prophecy, and the claimed possession of a special "baptism in the Holy Spirit." At the request of the president of the Synod, the Commission on Theology and Church Relations in 1968 began a study of the charismatic movement with special reference to the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The 1969 synodical convention specifically directed the commission to "make a comprehensive study of the charismatic movement with special emphasis on its exegetical aspects and theological implications." It was further suggested that "the Commission on Theology and Church Relations be encouraged to involve in its study brethren who claim to have received the baptism of the Spirit and related gifts." (Resolution 2-23, 1969 *Proceedings*, p. 90)

Since that time, the commission has sought in every practical way to acquaint itself with the theology of the charismatic movement. The commission has proceeded on the supposition that Lutherans involved in the charismatic movement do not share all the views of neo-Pentecostalism in general. Accordingly, the commission has particularly endeavored to learn the views of representative Lutheran charismatics and to address primarily those aspects of the charismatic movement that are a matter of interest or concern within our Synod. Members of the commission have on a number of occasions consulted privately with Lutheran pastors who are involved in this movement; they have studied documents, position papers, and booklets produced by Lutheran brethren who claim to have been baptized in the Spirit; they have examined carefully official reports and study documents prepared by Lutheran and non-Lutheran church bodies on this subject.<sup>1</sup> Representatives of the commission have attended portions of two conferences conducted by Lutheran charismatics. Furthermore, preliminary drafts of this document were examined and criticized by a number of Lutheran charismatic pastors. The commission herewith expresses its deep appreciation to those pastors for their cooperation and assistance.



In this document, we are presenting materials that deal primarily with baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and, to a lesser degree, miraculous healing, as these phenomena are occurring in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The first part presents general background information on the history of the movement, its sociological and psychological dimensions, and characteristic theological views of Lutheran charismatics. The second part of this document presents an analysis of relevant Biblical data, with particular reference to baptism in the Holy Spirit and the nature and purpose of spiritual gifts. In the final part, the commission offers its evaluation and recommendations from the perspective of Lutheran theology. The commission hopes this document will be helpful in encouraging further study and a proper evaluation of this increasingly significant movement.

## **I. Background Information**

### *A. A Brief History*

About a decade ago the Christian world became aware of a religious movement that suddenly sprang up within many of the major American denominations. Perhaps the most characteristic mark of this new movement was its emphasis on an experience called the "baptism of the Holy Spirit." Because some of its basic beliefs resembled those of the Pentecostal churches, it became known among the traditional Christian denominations as neo-Pentecostalism. However, the movement gradually and increasingly came to assume the name "charismatic." In this word the neo-Pentecostal Christians found a term that is both Biblical and popular without bearing the stigma that has often in the past attached itself to the emotionalism and excesses of some Pentecostals.

At first the new movement appeared to have arisen somewhat spontaneously, but on closer investigation it became quite evident that traditional Pentecostalism was having a strong influence on the charismatic movement.

The origin of neo-Pentecostalism is difficult to trace. It first attracted public attention in 1960 when Rev. Dennis Bennett, rector of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, Calif., resigned his office rather than see his congregation divided over the practice of speaking in tongues by himself and some members of his congregation. But this action, instead of easing tension, seems rather to have signaled the public debut of a movement that had been going on in private since the middle fifties. Reports of similar experiences in other non-Pentecostal churches suddenly were made known, reports that previously had been suppressed perhaps for reasons of uncertainty about the legitimacy of the experience or for fear of denominational censure.

Since 1960 this modern "charismatic renewal," as its leaders like to call it, has spread far beyond the Pentecostal churches. It is found within such denominations as the Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, and more recently, also the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox.

With the support of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI), the Blessed Trinity Society, and individuals who are anxious to share their experiences with others, it has touched nearly every Protestant denomination in our own country as well as in many foreign countries. In spite of warnings by denominational leaders and even the removal of pastors from their charges, the movement seems to increase in influence. Periodicals published by the FGBMFI and other charismatic groups carry regular reports of pastors and laymen who claim to have experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Leaders of the charismatic renewal are greatly encouraged by the fact that the movement has also made inroads into certain intellectual centers in America. Neo-Pentecostals frequently publicize the fact that Yale University experienced a Pentecostal revival in October 1961 when nineteen students and one faculty member received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. From Yale the movement then spread to Dartmouth, Princeton, and other university campuses across the nation.

Although the charismatic movement began to enter The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod some twenty years ago, the main thrust began in the middle sixties. By April 1968, when the first gathering of Missouri Synod charismatic pastors was held at Crystal City, Missouri, there were 44 pastors across the Synod claiming to have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When a conference of Lutheran pastors in the charismatic movement was held at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in May 1971, it was estimated that there were over 200 pastors in the Synod claiming to have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Lutheran charismatics, like their counterparts in other denominations, explain that their goal is not to separate from the organized church but to assist in revitalizing the church by bearing testimony to the remarkable work the Lord is doing in their own lives through the power of the Spirit. It is their hope that the mainline churches will regard the movement with an open mind and incorporate it into the mainstream of the church's life.

Various attempts have been made to account for the apparent success of the charismatic movement. Dennis Bennet explains its phenomenal growth in these words:

The church is in a mess, organized Christianity a failure. Why? Because the Holy Spirit has not had a fair chance to work experientially in the church. . . . It is time to stop relying on intellectual analyses and to start relying on spiritual experience. After all Christianity is not an intellectual matter at all. It is a purely personal and spiritual matter.<sup>2</sup>

Frederick Dale Bruner expresses the view that Protestant as well as Roman Catholic churches since the Second Vatican Council have exercised vigorous criticism of their own churches, especially with respect to their irrelevancy, institutionalism, and spiritual deadness. Appealing to harried Protestant pastors and to spiritually malnourished Protestant and Catholic laity, neo-Pentecostal Christians claim that the power for spiritual life in

the individual and in the church is to be found in the long-neglected but now discovered and experienced baptism in the Holy Spirit with its charismatic manifestations.<sup>3</sup>

A Lutheran pastor, recently won over to the movement, states:

It was obvious to me that my own ministry lacked the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. Certainly souls had been saved through the preaching and teaching of the Gospel. But what about the other works that Jesus did? <sup>4</sup>

#### *B. Sociological and Psychological Dimensions*

Psychologists too have sought an explanation for the spectacular growth experienced by the charismatic movement. Luther P. Gerlach and Virginia H. Hine, members of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Minnesota, have produced a study in which they discount the popular view that economic deprivation, social disorganization, and psychological maladjustment have been primary causes in the development of this movement. It is their opinion that the success of the charismatic revival is to be sought rather in the dynamics of the movement itself. They point to five factors that in particular have been instrumental in the rapid growth of neo-Pentecostalism:

1. The network of friendship, kinship, and other social ties that unites ministers, leaders, evangelists, and people in a "reticulate acephalous organizational structure" that enables them to reach all strata of society.
2. "Face-to-face recruitment along lines of pre-existing significant social relationships." Gerlach and Hine found that relatives accounted for the recruitment of 52 percent of their total sample, and close friends for another 29 percent. "Other recruiting relationships were those between neighbors, business associates, fellow students, employer-employee, or teacher-student, in which previous significant interaction had occurred."
3. A strong sense of commitment that grew out of a transforming act such as the practice of glossolalia, "which set the believer apart in some way from the larger social context, cut him off from past patterns of behavior and sometimes from past associations, identified him with other participants in the movement, and provided high motivation for changed behavior."
4. Encouragement to demonstrate a boldness of spirit for promoting the Lord's work.
5. A psychology of persecution. Among neo-Pentecostals it was found that ridicule, nonacceptance, or painful ejections from mainline denominational churches often resulted in increased growth; on the other hand, in cases where local officialdom posed little or no opposition, recruitment was more difficult.<sup>5</sup>



In recent years psychologists have also conducted controlled and comprehensive studies to ascertain whether participants in the charismatic revival are maladjusted individuals, emotionally unstable, or intellectually deprived. While older psychological opinion tended to relate glossolalia to schizophrenia, hysteria, group hypnosis, unadaptive anxiety reactions, or a higher degree of susceptibility to suggestion, more recent studies have claimed that such conclusions are no longer acceptable in the light of recent sociocultural and psychological data. Gerlach and Hine have reported that in seven studies conducted by psychologists or psychiatrists, Pentecostal glossolalia could not be related to mental illness. Speaking in tongues was not considered an indicator of neurosis or psychosis. Data indicate that although disturbed individuals may be attracted to the movement, there is no evidence that they exist in greater proportion within this movement than within the organized church. It is quite possible that the disturbed may be attracted because of their great need of help, and they may even do or say bizarre things as a manifestation of their illness, but it is not the result of the dynamics of the movement.<sup>6</sup>

Somewhat different conclusions were reached in a psychological and linguistic examination of glossolalia conducted recently by the Lutheran Medical Center in Brooklyn under the direction of John P. Kildahl, Ph. D., and Paul A. Qualben, M. D., and financed by the National Institute of Mental Health. According to their report, they compared the personalities of certain individuals who spoke in tongues with those who did not. Their purpose was "to determine the relationship between certain personality variables and the practice of speaking in tongues" (p. 5). In their study they employed a sampling of 39 individuals, 26 of whom were glossolalists and 13 nonglossolalists. All the participants were volunteers and were equated for age, sex, marital status, and education. All were considered "very religious." An important part of the study was a structured interview and four psychological tests. Among the significant findings in their "Final Progress Report" were the following:

1. As far as emotional and mental health is concerned, the two groups were found to be very similar. Neither group was mentally more healthy than the other. However, it was discovered that an individual's level of maturity did affect the way in which he used glossolalia. The more disturbed use it in a more "bizarre" way, while the maturer person employed it in a more careful manner and made more modest claims concerning its value and effectiveness. (Pp. 25 - 26)
2. Tongue-speakers are more dependent on authority figures than are nonglossolalists. They have a strong need for guidance "from some external authority" and a strong tendency to lean on "someone more powerful." Having such authority figures "often brings with it great feelings of peace and relaxation." (P. 27)

3. Glossolalists invariably initiate their speech in the presence of a benevolent authority figure, in reality or fantasy (p. 15). "They are able to develop a deeply trusting and submissive relationship to the authority figure who introduces them to the practice of glossolalia. Without completely turning oneself over to the leader, one cannot begin to speak in tongues. In psychotherapy this is called a "dependent transference" (pp. 26 f.). This ability to submit oneself to a mentor "is not a function of either mental health or illness"; rather, it is "the same general trait that is called hypnotizability." (P. 28)
4. The influence of a leader is also apparent in the style and type of glossolalia that is employed by a group. The Kildahl report states: "Where certain prominent tongue speakers had visited, whole groups of glossolalists would speak in his style of speech." (P. 27)
5. While speaking in tongues, the individual "does not lose contact with his environment and his senses continue to operate during the experience. But there is an apparent lessening of conscious control" (p. 6). Some believe that the movement of their tongues is directly controlled by God. This experience apparently brings with it a feeling of peace, joy, and inner harmony, and in certain cases gives the charismatic a "tremendous feeling of worth and power." (Pp. 7, 29)
6. Speaking in tongues "is not gibberish. The sounds appear to a non-linguist to have the rhythm and qualities of language." However, glossolalia as it is practiced today lacks the ordinary features that are characteristic of human speech and is not therefore to be classified among natural languages, either living or dead. (Pp. 5, 16, 25)<sup>7</sup>

Lutheran charismatics feel that the Kildahl report is unsatisfactory. They point out, in the first place, that the Kildahl-Qualben conclusions are based on too small a sample to be truly scientific and conclusive. Lutheran charismatics also deny that the Holy Spirit takes control of the person's mouth and tongue while speaking in tongues. They explain that those who speak in tongues have control over when and where they exercise the gift (just as St. Paul indicates in 1 Cor. 14:27-28). While speaking in tongues may be accompanied by a feeling of joy or closeness to God, it does not occur in a semihypnotic state, nor does it involve the speaker in a loss of consciousness or awareness of all that is going on about him. Lutheran charismatics admit that many people are taught the mechanics of speaking in tongues, but they emphasize that others have received the gift simply in response to prayer and without receiving any instruction or hearing anyone speak in tongues. Finally, Lutheran charismatics deny that speaking in tongues means that they are specially chosen by God; they emphasize that speaking in tongues is purely a gift of God's grace.<sup>8</sup>

While the congregations and pastors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod may find various psychological studies of neo-Pentecostalism to be interesting and helpful, such studies appear to be largely inconclusive at the present time. Furthermore, our concern as Christians should center especially on the theological aspects of this movement.



### *C. Theological Views of Lutheran Charismatics*

In spite of the fact that many books, pamphlets, and articles relating personal experiences and views have been produced by Lutheran charismatics in the past decade, it must be understood that no single voice speaks for the entire movement. Moreover, no single authoritative theological interpretation has emerged that is commonly accepted by all charismatics (or even by all *Lutheran* charismatics). There are, however, several basic theological viewpoints that appear with some frequency in the writings of Lutheran charismatics.<sup>9</sup> Among them are the following:

1. In the early church those who came to faith in Jesus Christ were baptized with water. But then as a second or succeeding step they expected also to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. The normal (although not the only) sequence of events was repentance, faith, water baptism, and baptism in the Holy Spirit.
2. Ordinarily this baptism in the Spirit was an experience that happened at a definite moment in time and was readily recognizable to all who were present since it was accompanied by manifestations of the Spirit, usually speaking in tongues. (Acts 2:1-4; 8:12-17; 10:44-48; 19:1-6)
3. The various gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Scripture are being given to God's people also today and may be sought according to the sovereign will of God. These gifts include extraordinary faith, power to witness to Jesus Christ, miraculous healing, speaking in tongues, the interpretation of tongues, prophecy, exorcism, and others. (1 Cor. 12:4-11, 27-31; 1 Cor. 14:1-5, 37-40; 1 Thess. 5:19, 20; Acts 2:17-18; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 11:13; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 13:8-12)
4. God's Word alone should determine the nature, purpose, and exercise of these spiritual gifts.
5. Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are founded on the Word and guided by the Word. In addition to the study of the Word and the reception of the sacraments, they are to empower and equip the church for her ministry of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to herself and to the world.
6. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is not to be identified with emotionalism, nor does it occur as a result of one's wrestling or because one has reached a certain stage of holiness or spirituality. The baptism in the Spirit is a gift offered by grace to both the strong and the weak in faith. It is to be claimed and received as one claims and receives any promise in the Word. When one becomes a child of God, the Lord gives him the Spirit as a gift; he is then "born of the Spirit" (John 3:5-6). But the Christian may also be "filled" or "baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5-8). With this "filling," the Spirit is allowed to express Himself more fully in and through the Christian's life. There are, however, various opinions among Lutheran charismatics with respect to the man-



ner in which baptism in the Spirit is to be received. Some have listed specific steps that are to be followed in the attainment of this gift; for example, the desire for baptism in the Spirit, an earnest effort to yield one's will to Jesus in all areas of life, fervent prayer for the gift, receiving the gift by faith, thanking God for granting baptism in the Spirit, and releasing the Spirit by praising the Lord in an unknown tongue.

7. Speaking in tongues, which in apostolic times was one of the manifestations of the Spirit, is an act of spiritual devotion (1 Cor. 14:2). As one worships God in tongues, his mind is at rest and his spirit prays, unhindered by the limitations of human understanding (1 Cor. 14:14). Though the worshiper does not understand with the mind what he is saying, he does have a clear sense of communion with God.
8. Praying in tongues is a power that the exalted Christ gives members of His church to express the inexpressible and praise God in new speech. It is a gift that should neither be disparaged nor discouraged in the church. To despise or even take lightly a gift of the Spirit is to put oneself in spiritual danger. (1 Thess. 5:19, 20; 1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1-39)
9. Speaking in tongues is not divisive. The cause of divisions in the church is always to be found in the ignorance and sinfulness of man, coupled with the agitation and devices of Satan.
10. The gift of healing, according to Mark 16:17-18, is one of the "sign gifts" by which God manifests His power to the world in a particularly striking manner. It is one of God's ways of confirming the truth of the Christian message.
11. Miraculous healing, which was very evident in the ministry of Jesus as well as in the apostolic church, is a gift of the Spirit that is still available to the Christian church today. However, it does not find ready acceptance in our day partially because even Christians have been affected to some extent by a naturalistic, materialistic philosophy—particularly popular in the Western world—which rules out any direct supernatural or divine intervention in the course of human events.
12. Prophecies exist in the church today even as in apostolic times. God still speaks directly to His children, communicating to them information to guide and direct them in a given situation in temporal matters. Some charismatics assert that this "word from God comes, not in connection with the sacraments nor with hearing the written or spoken Word, but at times of prayer or even in dreams" or in "prophecy, tongues, and interpretation." It is said that this view does not conflict with those statements of the Lutheran Confessions that are directed against enthusiasm, since Lutheran charismatics uphold the principle that conversion occurs solely through the Gospel.<sup>10</sup>

13. No member of a congregation should be pressured into seeking spiritual gifts or the baptism in the Holy Spirit nor be made to feel inferior because he does not possess or desire such gifts and experiences, but those members who claim the baptism in the Holy Spirit should be accepted as Lutheran Christians and be given proper instruction from God's Word as to how they should live with their gifts and experiences in a harmonious, edifying manner in the local congregation.
14. The pastor and elders of the church should prayerfully, carefully, and evangelically govern the use and correct any abuse of all spiritual gifts in the life of the church according to the Word of God.
15. A person is saved solely by faith in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior from sin and not because of any special measure or experience of the Holy Spirit or because of the presence or absence of any spiritual gift.
16. The Lord will bless any congregation that gives Christ and His Word its highest allegiance and allows God's Spirit the freedom to move in the lives of its members as He wills. Conversely, the Lord will withhold His full blessing from any congregation that places the traditions and interpretations of men above His Word or on a par with His Word or limits the activity of the Holy Spirit according to past patterns and human definitions.

## II. Biblical Analysis

Lutheran charismatics claim that their theological views supplement rather than contradict traditional Lutheran doctrine. That claim can be properly evaluated only on the basis of what the Scriptures teach. We shall first examine the Biblical teaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We will then summarize what the Scriptures teach concerning the Holy Spirit and His spiritual gifts in general before giving particular attention to St. Paul's treatment of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12–14. Finally, we will discuss whether the Scriptures promise extraordinary charismatic gifts to the church of every age.

### A. Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The distinctive doctrine and major emphasis of the neo-Pentecostal or charismatic movement is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is therefore crucial to understand what the Scriptures say about this teaching.

1. Baptism with the Holy Spirit is an expression that occurs in a slightly different form in six passages of the New Testament. It appears first in Matthew 3:11 where John the Baptist, speaking to the multitudes concerning Jesus, said: "I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I. . . . He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." (See also the parallel passages: Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33.) Jesus employed the same terminology shortly before His ascension into heaven. In Acts 1:5 it is reported that on the day of His



departure into heaven, Jesus told His disciples: "For John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 11:16 relates the reactions of Simon Peter when the Holy Spirit "fell on" Cornelius and his household. The apostle exclaims: "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'"

While these are the only passages that employ the specific terminology, "baptize with the Holy Spirit," there are other parts of Scripture that describe the same concept in different words; for example, "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4; 7:55; 9:17), or "the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the Word" (Acts 10:44-46), or "the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles" (Acts 10:45), or "the Holy Spirit came on them" (Acts 19:6). In each of these instances the context indicates an experience similar to baptism with the Holy Spirit.

2. Scripture is also very clear regarding the meaning of Spirit baptism in the apostolic church. The promise Jesus had given His disciples, "but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5), was fulfilled on Pentecost when God poured out His Spirit on 120 followers of the ascended Lord, giving them power to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. A similar experience occurred among the Samaritans when Philip preached the Gospel to them (Acts 8:14-15), and in the case of Cornelius and his family to whom Peter brought the Gospel (Acts 10:44-48). It was also experienced by the disciples at Ephesus when Paul baptized them in the name of Jesus (Acts 19:1-6). In each of these instances believers in Jesus were endowed with special supernatural gifts (Acts 2:43; 3:6-7; 5:12; 6:8; 7:55; 8:13; 9:40; etc.). Significantly, nowhere in Acts is the gift of the Spirit given to individuals in isolation from the community of Christians.
3. It will be noted, furthermore, that in each of these instances baptism with the Spirit occurred after conversion. The apostles were Christians before Pentecost. The Samaritans had given heed to the preaching of Philip before Peter was sent to them and prayed that they might receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:6, 14-15). Likewise in the case of Cornelius, he was "a devout man who feared God with all his household" and prayed constantly to Him even before Peter entered into his house and preached to him with the result that the Spirit fell on all who heard the Word. (Acts 10:2, 44-48)
4. There is nothing in these narratives to indicate that Luke is intent on giving the church a formula for receiving the baptism of the Spirit. The apostle Peter had already proclaimed to his conscience-stricken hearers on Pentecost: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of

your sins; and *you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to Him" (Acts 2:38-39). This promise is given not only to Christians in the apostolic age but to all future generations as well. It should be noted that there is no suggestion of a time interval between baptism in the name of Jesus and receiving the gift of the Spirit. Nor is there any indication in this important promise that the believer, after coming to faith, must then actively seek the gift of the Spirit before receiving it.

Lutheran theologians are generally agreed that Luke's purpose in recording the events in Acts 8 and 10 is to relate how God in a marvelous way demonstrated before the eyes of Peter and other representatives of the congregation at Jerusalem that the Gentiles also were to be received into the church even as the Jews. It has, therefore, been suggested by some Lutheran exegetes that the lapse in time between conversion and baptism with the Spirit, in the case of the Samaritans and of Cornelius, was for the purpose of bringing Peter and others to the scene and making them eye-witnesses as God poured out His Spirit on the Gentiles as He had done on the Jews at Pentecost. (Acts 11:13-18)

5. According to the Book of Acts, Christians in the apostolic church always received the baptism of the Holy Spirit solely as a gift, never as a blessing achieved on the basis of human effort. While charismatics sometimes emphasize that the Spirit must be earnestly sought after and prayed for, the major passages in Acts constantly refer to Him as the result of a promise from the Father (Acts 1:4-5; 2:33; 2:38-39; 8:20; 10:45), bestowed on the believer when he comes to faith.

When one looks specifically at the promise Jesus gave His disciples prior to Pentecost, it is evident that there were no conditions stated and no requirements made of them before they would receive the baptism of the Spirit. No mention is made of the need to pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit, nor that they should empty themselves of sin, surrender their wills to God, and make special preparations in other ways. Luke simply relates that Jesus charged His disciples "not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, He said, 'you heard from Me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'" (Acts 1:4-5)

There is no indication here that only those would receive the baptism who met certain conditions. Instead Jesus addressed Himself to all His disciples and made the general promise, "you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit." When the evangelist records the fulfillment of the promise on Pentecost, he states very specifically that "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4). It is significant that throughout the Book of Acts when the



Spirit descended on a group of believers, it is always stated or strongly implied that all were filled with the Spirit. There is no indication that one or more persons were ever denied the full gift of the Spirit due to insufficient preparation. Nor is there any suggestion of a partial filling by the Spirit as if to imply that He first enters the believer's heart and life to bring conversion and sanctification and then only later comes in His fullness and power when the justified person is ready, having sought baptism of the Spirit by earnest prayer.

Luther writes very forcefully on this point in his commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians. In Gal. 3:5, the apostle Paul asks: "Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?" Commenting on this verse, Luther writes that the entire Book of Acts

treats nothing else than that the Holy Spirit is not given through the law (men's deeds) but is given through the hearing of the Gospel. For when Peter preached, the Holy Spirit immediately fell on all those who heard the Word. On one day 3000 who heard Peter's proclamation believed and received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:41). Thus Cornelius received the Holy Spirit, though not on the basis of the alms he gave, but when Peter opened his mouth and was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who were listening to the Word with Cornelius (Acts 10:44). . . . Thus Cornelius and his friends whom he called to his house do not do anything, nor do they look to any preceding works, and yet as many as are present receive the Holy Spirit.<sup>11</sup>

Luther understood that the gift of the Holy Spirit, which was promised to the church on Pentecost, is given to all believers solely by the grace of God, not because of any effort or deed on the part of the recipient.

To be sure, Scripture frequently urges us to pray for the gift of the Spirit (Luke 11:13; Acts 4:31; 5:29-32). But these exhortations are not intended to imply that God will withhold His Spirit from those who do not earnestly seek Him. God grants His Spirit to all who believe. Nevertheless the Lord also wants us, His children, to pray for this gift and thereby indicate our earnest desire to be His temple and our humble dependence on all His gifts. Christians frequently pray for those blessings they already possess.

6. It is highly important also that the church today understands what the Scripture means when it exhorts the Christian to be filled with the Spirit and when it speaks of men full of the Spirit. Pentecostals and many neo-Pentecostals equate these terms with the possession

of charismatic gifts. They assert that when Scripture urges the believer to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18), it is encouraging him to seek and pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which will bestow on him such spiritual gifts as prophecy, divine healing, miracles, or speaking in tongues. (1 Cor. 12:8-10)

However, a study of pertinent passages in the Scripture indicates rather clearly that these expressions may have various meanings. On Pentecost the disciples, filled with the Spirit, spoke in tongues, proclaiming the wondrous works of God (Acts 2:11). The deacons in Acts 6:3 were to be men full of the Spirit and of wisdom in order that they might distribute food and clothing to the needy in a fair and equitable manner. Stephen, full of the Spirit, disputed with the members of the Jewish Sanhedrin and put them to silence (Acts 6:10). Paul was filled with the Spirit at his baptism and so was equipped to be a missionary to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15-18). In Ephesians 5:18 the apostle exhorts all Christians to be filled with the Spirit, obviously meaning that they should employ the powers given them by the Spirit to live Christian lives, for the entire fifth chapter of the epistle deals with sanctification.

Thus the expression "filled with the Holy Spirit," as it is used in Scripture, very frequently has no apparent relationship to charismatic gifts. Consequently, it is often used in conjunction with such terms as "wisdom" or "faith" (Acts 6:3). Men full of the Spirit are children of God whom the Spirit has endowed with the gift of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord (1 Cor. 12:3), as well as gifts and talents that enable them to serve Christ and their fellowmen in the church.

#### *B. The Holy Spirit and His Gifts*

The baptism of the Holy Spirit must be studied in the larger Biblical context of the Holy Spirit and His spiritual gifts. One of the themes that appears prominently in both Testaments represents the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Power who gives special gifts to the people of God in order to enable them to serve Him according to His will. In Old Testament times it was the Spirit who gave the rulers and military leaders the ability to govern in times of emergency. (1 Sam. 10:1-7; 16:13)

He gave the judges of Israel physical strength, courage, and wisdom to wage war against the enemies of God's people (Judg. 3:7-10; 6:33 ff.). He endowed the artisans with craftsmanship in building the tabernacle (Ex. 31:2-4). In a very special sense of the word, He equipped His "prophets" to serve as mouthpieces of God in order to reveal His will to the people. (2 Sam. 23:2; Neh. 9:20, 30; Ezek. 11:5; Hos. 9:7; Zech. 7:12)



Throughout the New Testament, the Spirit is presented as the mark of the new age that began with the resurrection of Jesus and Pentecost. The Holy Spirit in whose name we are baptized is the Spirit who was promised in the Old Testament (cf. Exek. 36:25-38; Jer. 31:31-34; Ps. 51:10-12). But He is associated with God's new covenant and the passing away of the old covenant (cf. 2 Cor. 3). To confess Jesus as Lord by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3) is to confess that we stand in the new testament in distinction from the old, for the Spirit is the "down payment" or "firstfruits" of the new age (cf. Rom. 8:23, 2 Cor. 5:5; 1:22). The church, created by the Holy Spirit through Baptism and the Word, is the *new* Israel of God.

In the New Testament the Spirit's work was intensified. This became evident even before the events of Pentecost. Early in his ministry John the Baptist proclaimed the good news that Jesus would "baptize" His people with the Holy Spirit. This indicated that with the coming of the Kingdom Jesus would pour out His Spirit on them in a very special measure.

Prior to His suffering and death on the cross, Jesus gave His disciples the promise of the Spirit. The Spirit would be their *parakleetos*, their Comforter and Counselor (John 14:26). He would guide them into all truth; He would teach them all things and again remind them of all that Jesus had told them while He was with them. (John 14:17, 26; 16:13)

Shortly before His ascension into heaven, the Savior told the disciples to remain in Jerusalem until they had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5); then they should employ this power to bear witness to Christ in all the world. (Acts 1:8)

In the Book of Acts it is evident that these promises concerning the Holy Spirit were fulfilled. The coming of Pentecost brought with it the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus equipped His followers with such spiritual gifts as were needed to carry out the task of evangelizing the world. Some of these gifts were miraculous. The disciples on Pentecost were heard speaking of the wonderful works of God in languages they had not learned (Acts 2:6-12). Some time later in the history of the early church, this experience was repeated with other believers in Christ. (Acts 10:46; 19:6)

Filled with the Holy Spirit, the disciples of Jesus performed many signs and wonders (Acts 5:12; 6:8); they healed the lame (Acts 3:6), the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits (Acts 5:16; 8:6-8), and those who were paralyzed (Acts 9:34); on occasions they even raised the dead. (Acts 9:40; see also Acts 13:9-11; 14:8-11; 16:18; 19:11-12; 20:7-12.)

Of special importance, however, were the less spectacular spiritual gifts that were directly related to the proclamation of the Gospel. After Pentecost the disciples possessed an intense desire to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They employed every opportunity to witness to the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of their Lord. They proclaimed Christ with new courage and boldness, and it is very evident they understood better than before Pentecost the purpose and significance of Christ's death and resurrection. (Acts 2:14-40; 3:12-26; 4:1-22; 5:29-32; 7:1-60; 8:32-35)

After Pentecost the Holy Spirit took a very active part in directing the early church into an intensive program of carrying the Gospel into all the world. It was the Spirit who led Philip to the chariot of the Ethiopian and gave him the opportunity to speak to him of the Savior (Acts 8:29). It was the Spirit who directed Simon Peter to the house of the Gentile Cornelius to proclaim to him the Gospel (Acts 10). Again it was the Spirit who chose Paul and Barnabas to be missionaries to the Gentile world (Acts 13:1-3) and then directed them through Asia Minor into Macedonia. (Acts 16:6-10)

The Bible also provides a number of lists that enumerate specific spiritual gifts with which God has endowed His church. One of the more familiar listings is recorded in 1 Corinthians 12 where the spiritual gifts mentioned are wisdom, knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, the ability to distinguish between spirits, various kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. It should be carefully noted that while the apostle clearly indicates that miraculous gifts of the Spirit were possessed by some individuals in the Corinthian congregation, he does not deal with the subject extensively in his letters to other churches. When Paul in other epistles presents to his readers lists of spiritual gifts, or when he discusses the duties and functions of the church, or even when he catalogs the qualifications of pastors and other church leaders, he mentions only the less spectacular gifts, and his emphasis is on communicating the Gospel (Eph. 4:4-11; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:7-9). Some have interpreted this silence to mean that the miraculous gifts that were originally given to the followers of Christ soon disappeared from the early church after they had served their special purpose. Others, however, feel that such an argument from silence is inconclusive because there may have been no problem in these churches with regard to the proper use of these gifts.

In the fifth chapter of Galatians the apostle discusses the fruits of the Spirit which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (vv. 22-23). Here it should be noted that St. Paul lists the less spectacular gifts of the Spirit, namely, the more common attitudes and spiritual qualities of the Christian that result from his regeneration.

To be considered also is that Holy Scripture indicates with remarkable consistency that the Spirit imparts His gifts in response to the needs of His kingdom (Gen. 41:38; Num. 11:16-17, 24-26, 29; 27:18-23; 1 Sam. 16:13; Judg. 6:1-6, 33-34; 13:1-3, 24-25; Acts 2:1-43; 4:1-22; 6:1-11; 8:26-40). He bestows His special gifts on God's people in a historical context. In the New Testament the primary emphasis is that the Spirit equips the church to meet the world's need for the Gospel (Acts 8:5-8; 8:14-17; 11:1-18; 13:1-3; 16:6-10). For this reason the apostle strongly emphasized the importance of proclaiming Christ in a clear, intelligible manner. (1 Cor. 14:1-12)

In short, the Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord and no other. Jesus promises not only that the Spirit "will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment" but that He will glorify Jesus Christ, "for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you" (John 16:8, 14). He is quite willing to be anonymous as long as Christ is proclaimed and exalted (John 16:13-14). The Spirit does not provide a second foundation for faith but bears witness to Jesus Christ as the church's one Foundation. Through Him we confess Jesus as Lord (1 Cor. 12:3) and call God our Father (Gal. 4:6). It is through the Spirit that we serve God and one another and overcome the temptations that arise in our lives. The Spirit transforms and empowers the whole life and outlook of those who receive Him, gives birth to the community of the church, and enables that church to proclaim the Word with boldness.

*C. The Nature and Purpose of Spiritual Gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-14*

One of the most instructive sections in Holy Scriptures on the nature and purpose of spiritual gifts is 1 Corinthians 12-14. We shall not attempt to reconstruct the total problem that troubled the church at Corinth with respect to charismatic gifts, nor shall we seek to review the questions that may have been asked by the congregation. Instead we shall note some of the basic instructions that Paul gives in these chapters regarding spiritual gifts. Among the points made by St. Paul that are particularly relevant to our discussion are the following:

1. Already in the preface to his letter the apostle calls the attention of the Corinthians to the many blessings they possess in Christ. In Him they have every spiritual gift (1:7); they have sanctification (1:2), the grace of God (1:4), enrichment in speech and knowledge (1:5). Because they are in Christ, they lack no spiritual gift. They also wait for the "revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ." Only the return of the Savior would bring complete victory for them. Apparently the Corinthian Christians thought of themselves as already existing in the realm of glory, engaging in the work of the Spirit, which they conceived of as being beyond Christ. Therefore, the apostle reminds them again and again that the spiritual gifts they now possess are theirs *in the crucified and resurrected Christ*. And at His return they will be complete.

But while possessing all spiritual blessings, they were not using them as they should, and in chapters 12 to 14 Paul proceeds to give them instructions on the nature, purpose, and proper use of these great gifts.

2. The fact that an individual is in an ecstatic state does not in itself indicate that he is spiritual. Ecstasy is not limited to Christians. The Corinthians knew this from past experience. Before they were children of God, the very essence of their religious



experience was their feeling of being carried away by spiritual forces. But then they were led away to dumb idols. Now the Corinthians are being led by the Spirit. They can recognize this from the fact that they are able to call Jesus their Lord. This confession of Christ is the characteristic mark of those possessed by the Spirit of God, says Paul.

3. But if the central work of the Spirit is leading men to honor Christ by confessing faith in Him as Lord, the Holy Spirit also manifests Himself through a variety of gifts and services with which He endows the Christian church. In 1 Cor. 12:8-10, 38-30, the apostle provides lists of the spiritual gifts he had in mind. They include the utterance of wisdom, the utterance of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, the ability to discern spirits, various kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. Prominent at the head of the lists are gifts of intelligent and thoughtful utterance. Prominent at the end are gifts of tongues and their interpretation.

Among the spiritual gifts referred to in 1 Corinthians 12 are a number of terms that require some explanation. In verse 8 "the utterance of wisdom" and "the utterance of knowledge" may refer to an exceptionally thorough knowledge of the great truths of divine revelation, particularly the mysteries of the Gospel, and the ability to expound them in a clear and convincing manner as well as to apply them to individual cases in life. "Faith," in this context, can hardly refer to saving or justifying faith but must point to a heroic, unwavering trust and confidence in the power of God to reveal Himself in extraordinary deeds that may seem impossible to men. The expression "gifts of healing" no doubt refers to those remarkable deeds performed in the early Christian church by certain believers who were enabled by the power of God to heal the sick without medication, cast out unclean spirits, cure the lame, and even on occasions raise the dead. "The working of miracles" is a broader term including the many wondrous deeds performed by the early Christians through the almighty power of Christ.

"Prophecy" is a rather difficult term to understand, since it is used in various ways in Scripture. It does not refer primarily to the gift of declaring coming events in advance, although this did occur in the apostolic church (Acts 11:27: Agabus). It includes also the God-given ability to interpret Scripture correctly and to apply its message of Law and Gospel to the needs of men. It is the gift of expressing what the will of God was in a given situation. The ability to "distinguish between spirits" refers to a God-given power by which certain individuals in the early church were able to test the prophets to determine whether they were false or true and to judge whether a doctrine was of God or not.

"Various kinds of tongues," in the case of the Corinthians, apparently had reference to a "language," unintelligible to others as well as to the speaker, by which a Christian praised God. (Paul discusses this gift at great length in 1 Corinthians 14.) "The interpretation of tongues" evidently was the ability to transmit the content and message of such "language" for the benefit and edification of the speaker and other members of the body of Christ.

4. These spiritual gifts are not reserved for the select few in the church, who are consequently in a privileged class above the rest; instead, Paul states that all Christians have been endowed by the Spirit with gifts of one kind or another. (V. 7)
5. All Christians have been baptized into the body of Christ, and all are made to drink of the one Spirit (v. 13). Therefore the spiritual gifts that each possesses are for the benefit of the entire church; they are given "for the common good" (v. 7). The Christian is to use his gifts in the service of Christ's body, the church, and not merely to serve himself. Any use of the Spirit's gifts that does not edify the church is contrary to the Spirit's intention.
6. In 1 Corinthians 13 Paul discusses the basic attitude with which the Christian is to use the spiritual gifts God has given him. In the previous chapter he has indicated that they are *charismata*, gifts of grace. Now the apostle admonishes the Corinthians to employ them in a spirit of love.
7. It appears that in the congregation at Corinth the possession of certain spiritual gifts had led to senseless pride and chaotic confusion. Paul, therefore, admonished them in a most forceful manner that love must permeate and motivate their use of spiritual gifts or they become meaningless and useless. Even though a person may possess the very loftiest kind of tongues-speaking and though he may be able to speak not only in an unknown human language but with the tongues of angels, unless this gift is exercised in a spirit of love, it becomes nothing more than an unintelligible, meaningless set of sounds. Neither speaking in tongues nor prophetic insights nor heroic faith that can move mountains nor superhuman sacrifice can be useful and meaningful unless they are exercised in a spirit of Christian love. Thus it is not the miraculous nature of a gift nor the spectacular character of one's willingness to sacrifice that makes spiritual gifts unambiguous marks of the Spirit's presence and power; it is only the spirit of Christian love in which the gifts are exercised.
8. St. Paul then proceeds to describe very carefully the nature of this love about which he is speaking. It is not primarily something emotional or ecstatic, passionate or fiery; instead, it



tends to tame those emotions that are so apt to lead to the abuse of spiritual gifts. Love is patient, long-suffering, and kind. More specifically, it is not jealous or boastful, arrogant or rude, irritable or resentful. It does not insist on having its own way. It does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in what is right.

9. Christian love also has the remarkable characteristic that it will continue on into the unending future, always relevant. Other gifts of the Spirit such as prophecies, tongues, and knowledge are imperfect and incomplete in this life and shall therefore pass away when they have served their purpose, but Christian love will remain intact even in the state of perfection. (13:9-13)
10. In the context of this magnificent discussion of Christian love, the apostle then exhorts the Corinthian congregation: "Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy" (14:1). Immediately thereafter, he addresses himself to certain problems that had arisen in Corinth with regard to speaking in tongues.
11. St. Paul, who himself possessed the gift of tongues (1 Cor. 14:18), believed that it could be an authentic gift of the Spirit. He did not forbid its use for self-edification or, when interpreted, for the edification of others (1 Cor. 14:5, 39). However, it should be carefully noted that the apostle in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14 is not discussing the gift of tongues for the purpose of encouraging or assisting the Corinthians in acquiring this gift. His purpose is rather to point out dangers and abuses that have resulted from its misuse and to encourage the use of other spiritual gifts, especially prophecy.
12. St. Paul prefers prophecy to tongue-speaking for a number of reasons. One who speaks in tongues speaks not to men but to God, for no one understands him, and the result is that he edifies only himself (14:2). On the other hand, he who prophesies speaks to men for their upbuilding, encouragement, and consolation. Such a person edifies the church. Edification now becomes the theme of this chapter (vv. 3, 4, 5, 12, 17, 26). According to St. Paul's manner of thinking, the ultimate criterion for a spiritual gift is this: "Does it build the church?"
13. Tongue-speaking can be useful in the church only if it is supplemented with the gift of interpretation (v. 5), for only then will it edify the church. Without interpretation no one will know what is being said, and it will be as if one speaks into the air (v. 9). Therefore he who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret in order to edify (v. 13). Paul thanks God that he has spoken in tongues more than all of them (v. 18); nevertheless, he concludes: "I would rather speak five words with my



mind, in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (v. 19). In full accord with this expressed principle, we have no record of Paul ever speaking to his churches except in understandable language.

14. Accenting the gift of tongues out of proportion to other gifts is a sign of immaturity. In 1 Cor. 14:20-25 the apostle therefore challenges the Corinthians to "grow up" in their thinking. They should consider the effect that speaking in tongues might have on the church's program of evangelism. At an assembly of the church the effect of speaking in tongues on "outsiders" and unbelievers may be adverse, for it may lead them to think Christians are mad (v. 23). In verse 21 the apostle inserts an Old Testament quotation (Is. 28:11-12) into the discussion, emphasizing that the effect of tongues on an unbeliever will be to harden rather than soften his heart.<sup>12</sup> Thus the use of strange tongues in the Corinthian congregation might not serve to convert the sinner but instead could cause him to blaspheme.

On the other hand, when members of the Corinthian congregation prophesy, which involves a testimony of their faith, and an outsider is present, there is the possibility that the unbeliever will be made conscious of his sin and unbelief. The secret sins of his heart may be revealed, and the result might well be that such a one repents and worships God, openly recognizing God's presence in the congregation. Using the gift of prophecy in that way may result in winning people for Christ.

15. Each believer is to consider himself a vital and responsible participant in the life of the congregation. In a church service everything should be done in an orderly fashion. Although Paul does not forbid speaking in tongues in their worship services (v. 39) he makes three important stipulations: (a) not more than three should speak in tongues in any one service; (b) these three should take turns and not speak all at once; (c) there should always be an interpreter present. Without an interpreter "let each of them keep silence in church and speak to himself and to God." (Vv. 27-28)

The same rules of good order apply to those who prophesy. They should prophesy in turn while the rest exercise judgment on what is said. This sentence indicates that the assembly's right to criticize should not be suspended no matter what gift might be exercised. Since God is a God not of confusion but of peace, all gifts, even prophecy, should be used in an orderly fashion.

#### *D. The Gifts of the Spirit Today*

Of primary importance in the current discussion is the question whether the Lord has promised to give His Spirit to the Christian church today in the same manner that He gave the Spirit to the church of the first century, enabling believers to perform miracles, heal the sick, cast out demons, raise the dead, prophesy, or speak in tongues. Are the events recorded in Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19 to be interpreted solely as historical happenings that occurred in apostolic times, or should these passages be considered promises indicating what the Lord will do in behalf of His people also in future generations?

These narratives are presented by Luke as historical accounts and without any indication that they are to be considered promises also to future generations. Accordingly, Lutheran theologians in the past have usually interpreted them as experiences that occurred only in the apostolic church. Lutheran dogmaticians in earlier centuries carefully distinguished between baptism with the Holy Spirit and baptism in the name of Jesus. Only the latter was considered a sacrament to be performed in the church until the return of Christ. For these dogmaticians, baptism with the Holy Spirit, together with charismatic gifts, was limited to the apostolic age.

In more recent years, other Lutheran theologians identified the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the conversion of the sinner, which takes place through the Word and sacraments. Dr. Theodore Engelder, for example, writes:

All Christians are "baptized with the Holy Ghost," Luke 3:16. This term describes the work of the Holy Ghost in saving, in regenerating and justifying the sinner, sanctifying and preserving the Christian, and bestowing upon him the gifts and power he needs in his Christian calling, Acts 2:17; Is. 44:3; Zech. 12:10; Titus 3:6; 1 Cor. 12:3; Eph. 5:18; 1 Cor. 6:11; Gal. 3:1; Luke 11:13. . . . The term is used in an unscriptural sense by the extreme enthusiasts, who define "the baptism of the Holy Ghost" as the bestowal of sinless perfection . . . accompanied by miracle-working power, as the "second blessing," consequent upon the reconsecration of the soul to a higher and deeper life. . . . Some even go so far as to designate it the chief and greatest blessing, while according to Scripture justification by faith is the chief and supreme thing in the life of the Christian, the greatest blessing, the source of all blessings.<sup>13</sup>

While Lutheran theologians have at times differed in their understanding of the term "baptism with the Holy Spirit," they have rather consistently held that the extraordinary charismatic gifts mentioned in Acts and 1 Corinthians were no longer given after the close of the apostolic age.

Even passages such as Mark 16:17-18 and 1 Cor. 13:8-10 do not clearly promise that God will endow His church throughout the centuries with the charismatic gifts that were given to the early Christians. Mark 16:17-18



does indeed state that "these signs will accompany those who believe: in My name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover." There is today almost unanimous agreement among scholars that verses 9 to 20 are not a part of the authentic text of the 16th chapter of the Gospel of Mark.<sup>14</sup> But even if these verses are authentic, they do not support the view of those who claim that in all ages of Christendom believers will be accompanied by a display of miracles. Understanding these verses in such an absolute sense would force one to conclude that these words of Jesus are unfulfilled, since such miracles have not always accompanied believers.

First Corinthians 13:8-10 has at times been quoted to prove that extraordinary charismatic gifts will remain in the church until the return of Christ, at which time that which is imperfect will pass away. However, if this passage is employed in this manner, one must conclude that not only tongues, prophecy, and knowledge will continue to exist in the church but also apostles and prophets, since they too are included among the spiritual or charismatic gifts listed in 1 Cor. 12:28. On the other hand, 1 Cor. 13:8-10 should not be used to prove the opposite. The apostle's statements that prophecies will pass away and tongues will cease are spoken in an eschatological context and do not prove that such gifts will end with the apostolic age. Moreover, his chief point in these verses is to stress the abiding character of love rather than the exact duration of extraordinary charismatic gifts.

It is noteworthy that the Scripture nowhere promises or encourages us to hope that extraordinary charismatic gifts will become the possession of the Christian church throughout the centuries. The pattern set in Scripture may actually indicate the opposite. While gifts of the Spirit are spoken of throughout the Bible, different gifts were given at different times in history depending on the needs of the Kingdom. The church can be sure that the Spirit will grant it those blessings that it will need to build the church, but it will remember that the Lord may have other gifts in mind for His people than those He granted the Christians in apostolic times. The church today must not reason in a manner that would lead us to conclude that because the Holy Spirit gave Samson the ability to fight lions or David the talent to govern, we can therefore expect Him to endow us similarly. The church must not conclude that because the Christian community in apostolic times had members who could speak in tongues, therefore the church today *must* possess similar gifts or it is somehow incomplete. It must not contend that because the church of the apostles had in its midst those with the ability to perform miracles of healing, therefore the church of the twentieth century *must* have members with similar gifts or it lacks an essential characteristic of the body of Christ. To be sure, the Lord *may* choose to give such gifts; but He gives to His church according to His good and gracious will and in keeping with His promises.



The Christian church today will accept with joy and gratitude any gift that the Spirit in His grace may choose to bestow on us for the purpose of edifying the body of Christ. It will recognize that the Lord does not forsake His church but promises the abiding presence of His Spirit. The church, therefore, will not reject out of hand the possibility that God may in His grace and wisdom endow some in Christendom with the same abilities and powers He gave His church in past centuries. It will take care lest it quench the Spirit by neither praying for nor expecting God's presence and power in building His church. But it will also take seriously the admonition of the apostle to "test the spirits to see whether they are of God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1; 1 Cor. 12:10)<sup>15</sup>

The church should seek the Holy Spirit and His gifts where God has promised them, in the Word and sacraments. The Scriptures make this point abundantly clear. In the house of Cornelius, for example, the preached word of Peter about Jesus Christ was the occasion for the gift of the Holy Spirit "on all who heard the word" (Acts 10:44). In Ephesus it was Paul's proclamation of Jesus that led to baptism in the name of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples of John (Acts 19:4-6). The Galatians, writes the apostle Paul, received the Spirit "by hearing with faith" (Gal. 3:3, 5). Word and sacraments are the instruments of the Spirit of God through which God continues to give His gifts to the church in this and every age.<sup>16</sup>

### III. Conclusions and Recommendations

#### *A. A Response to Issues Raised by the Charismatic Movement Within Lutheranism*<sup>17</sup>

1. *Terminology.* The terminology "baptism in the Holy Spirit" is not frequently employed in Lutheran theological literature. However, it should be recognized that this language was used both by Jesus and by the apostolic church. Its use, therefore, should not be considered sectarian or contrary to sound doctrine.

Historically, however, this term has frequently been employed to describe concepts and doctrines that are not in accord with Scripture. Lutherans will exercise great care, therefore, to use this expression in such a way that it represents a truly Biblical concept.

2. *The Promise of the Spirit.* In accord with Jesus' promise (Acts 1:4, 5, 8), the followers of Christ were baptized with the Holy Spirit on the first Pentecost when the Spirit's presence and power were manifested in a most remarkable manner, and three thousand of those in attendance were converted to the Christian faith. Whether baptism in the Holy Spirit was a once-for-all event that occurred solely on Pentecost or an experience that would be repeated in the Christian church throughout the centuries can-

not be determined with certainty. But it is quite clear from Scripture that "the gift of the Holy Spirit" has been promised to all generations of Christians. (Acts 2:39)

While we Christians rejoice in this gracious promise, we should recognize that this gift of the Spirit does not necessarily include the promise of all extraordinary spiritual gifts that were once given to the apostolic church, such as speaking in tongues, miracles of healing, or prophecy. According to the pattern of Sacred Scripture, God does not necessarily give His church in all ages the same special gifts; instead, He bestows His blessings according to His good pleasure and the needs of the church.

Even in the apostolic church, where the gifts of tongues and healing were very evident, it is not clear that all Christians possessed these charismatic gifts. There is no indication that many important persons referred to in the Book of Acts as believers in Jesus, performing effective work in the Kingdom, were endowed with the gift of tongues or of healing. The Christian church must therefore be extremely careful not to place too much emphasis on any one of these gifts. For example, it is not in accord with the clear intent of Scripture when glossolalia is made the primary or indispensable sign of baptism in the Spirit.

3. *Christological Concerns.* In view of present world conditions, many Christians welcome the greater emphasis that has been placed on the work of the Holy Spirit in recent years. They yearn for a spiritual renewal in the church, for a greater amount of zeal and commitment and for less apathy in carrying on the Lord's work, and for power in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations. Christians in general are agreed that there is great need for a deeper appreciation of the work of the Spirit in the church today.

But in the light of recent developments in Christendom, the Lutheran Church is also deeply concerned lest the function of the Spirit be emphasized in a manner that would tend to make the saving work of Christ appear less important. This may be the unintentional result of teaching a Christian that it is necessary for him to experience two separate encounters: first, an encounter with Christ for conversion and forgiveness; and second, a further encounter with the Spirit to obtain power to serve effectively in Christ's kingdom. Lutherans believe that when they have Christ by faith, they also have the Holy Spirit and with Him all that is necessary for time and eternity as far as their spiritual life is concerned.

The work of Christ may also appear less important when baptism in the Holy Spirit is emphasized in such a way as to detract from the importance the Scripture places on baptizing with water or, as it is called in the Book of Acts, "baptism in the name of Jesus." History indicates rather clearly that those denominations that in the past have placed particular emphasis on Spirit baptism have also considered water baptism to be of less significance.

Lutheran Christians will also be careful to describe the life and work of Jesus in such a way that the inseparability of His divine and human natures is properly maintained and that His work of atonement receives the primary emphasis. Jesus was indeed richly endowed with the Holy Spirit. But when His work is portrayed as though He performed it merely or chiefly as a man filled with the Holy Spirit and not as the God-man, and when the Spirit-filled Jesus is proclaimed primarily as the pattern or example of what believers filled with the Holy Spirit can do today, then we have a Christology that has parted company with the Biblical, creedal, and confessional witness to Jesus Christ. Such emphases, when carried to their ultimate conclusion, would deprive the atonement of its divine redemptive power and treat Jesus more as man's pattern for life than his Redeemer from eternal death.

The Christian must exercise special caution as he defines the relationship between the Spirit and Jesus in the state of humiliation, lest he embrace a form of subordinationism. Scripture does indeed portray Jesus' ministry as having been conducted *in the power of the Spirit*. Both the Old and the New Testaments speak of Jesus being anointed with the Spirit (Is. 11:2-9; 61:1 ff.; Luke 4:18 ff.). The Savior was led into the wilderness *by the Spirit* for the purpose of being tempted by Satan (Luke 4:1 ff.). He returned and began His public ministry, preaching and teaching in Galilee *in the power of the Spirit* (Luke 4:14). It is even said that Jesus went through the land of Israel doing good, healing all who were overpowered by the devil, because God had anointed Him *with the Spirit and with power* (Acts 10:38 f.). Moreover, Jesus' suffering and death are described in the Book of Hebrews as occurring through the Holy Spirit. (9:14)

However, especially in the Gospel of St. John, Jesus is portrayed as the One who sends forth the Spirit to be a *parakleetos*, a Counselor and Comforter who shall abide with His church and equip it with the power needed to perform its task in evangelizing the world. Moreover, the Scriptures also make it clear that the Holy Spirit's work is not to exalt Himself above the Father and the Son but to lead men to confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ and to recognize His Father as their own. In presenting this important doctrine, one must be extremely careful, therefore, not to teach a subordinationism of either the Son or the Spirit. Although the relationship between these two Persons is presented in



Scripture from both points of view, the Bible clearly teaches that the three Persons in the Trinity are coequal. A proper understanding of Spirit theology is dependent on a correct view both of the Trinity and of the personal union of the two natures in Christ.

4. *Conversion and Spirit Baptism.* In the contemporary theological discussion there is considerable debate on the relation of conversion to baptism in the Spirit. The question is asked: "Does baptism in the Holy Spirit occur at the time of conversion, or is it an experience distinct from and subsequent to one's coming to faith?" Basing their conclusions on Acts 2:38-41, many exegeses today favor the view that baptism in the Holy Spirit is bestowed on *all* Christians when they receive Christian baptism and come to faith in Christ. The view of the Lutheran Confessions that the fullness of the Holy Spirit is bestowed on believers when they are converted is in harmony with this interpretation. This view recognizes, of course, that the Holy Spirit continues to give His gifts and blessings to believers after their conversion. But it also is opposed to the notion that "ordinary" believers somehow lack the Holy Spirit.

Lutheran theologians are concerned, therefore, when baptism in the Spirit is viewed as a second work of the Spirit in addition to and beyond conversion and sanctification, and when the Christian is required to fulfill certain preconditions before receiving Spirit baptism, such as earnest wrestling with God, heart purification, complete obedience, yielding, surrendering oneself to God, and exercising "total faith," which is different from ordinary trust in Christ. The frequent charismatic emphasis that only those who are properly disposed to receive the baptism of the Spirit through an attitude of expectancy, openness, and searching will actually receive it, as well as attempts to train people to receive such gifts of the Spirit as speaking in tongues, may actually cultivate the notion that man's effort in some way is essential for the reception of God's free gifts. In his Epistle to the Galatians, St. Paul emphatically states that the Christians in Galatia had received the Spirit not by the works of the Law but by hearing with faith. (Gal. 3:5)

5. *Means of Grace.* Lutherans are deeply concerned when the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit is treated as the means by which God equips the church for her mission in the world, particularly when the baptism in the Spirit is regarded (in practice, if not in theory) as a supplement to the means of grace. Both the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions teach that the Word and the sacraments are the only means of grace and that the Holy Spirit always accompanies their use and through them bestows on the church *all* the blessings that are ours in Christ

as well as every spiritual gift that is needed to carry out the mission of the church in a sinful world (cf. Matt. 28:19; Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 11:26; Luke 16:29). Beyond the Word and sacraments nothing is needed to equip the church for its task, for through them the Spirit gives life, power, and growth to the church. Christians will therefore continue to seek power and renewal for the church in the Word and sacraments, not in special signs and miracles.<sup>18</sup>

Luther and the Lutheran Confessions describe as "enthusiasm" (*Schwärmerei*) the view that God reveals Himself and bestows His spiritual gifts apart from the objective and external Word and sacraments. Luther warns in the Smalcald Articles:

In short, enthusiasm clings to Adam and his descendants from the beginning to the end of the world. It is a poison implanted and inoculated in man by the old dragon, and it is the source, strength, and power of all heresy, including that of the papacy and Mohammedanism. Accordingly, we should and must constantly maintain that God will not deal with us except through his external Word and sacrament. Whatever is attributed to the Spirit apart from such Word and sacrament is of the devil.<sup>19</sup>

In this connection it needs to be underscored that the Holy Spirit is given through the preaching of the work of Christ, that is, the Gospel—not through preaching about the Holy Spirit and His gifts (important as that is). The emphasis of our Lutheran heritage on the external Word as the instrument of the Holy Spirit helps prevent a subjectivism that seeks divine comfort and strength through an interior experience rather than in the objective word of the Gospel. To accent the former rather than the latter as the basis of Christian certainty can easily lead either to pride or despair instead of humble trust in the Gospel promises. Moreover, when baptism with the Holy Spirit is considered to be a second experience beyond the sacrament of Holy Baptism and when it is said to grant powers and blessings that are not given through the Word and sacraments, the result is a view that fails to take into account the full benefits of Holy Baptism. Our Lutheran Confessions state that Baptism grants to the believer "the grace, Spirit, and power to suppress the old man so that the new may come forth and grow strong."<sup>20</sup>

6. *Unity of the Church.* When Scripture discusses the unity of the Christian church, it always involves the activity of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who produces the fellowship of believers in the body of Christ. It is the Spirit who endows the members of the church with gifts by which they can serve one another in the kingdom of God. Christian unity must be unity in the Spirit. It is therefore unfortunate that the neo-Pentecostal distinction



between Spirit-baptized Christians and other Christians easily fosters the incorrect and divisive notion that the former constitute a spiritually elite class of Christians. The faith that unites *all* believers to Christ and to one another also makes *all* members of His body equally acceptable to God (cf. Eph. 4:3-6). In the body of Christ, the Spirit "apportions to each one individually as He wills" (1 Cor. 12:11). Spiritual gifts are to be used in humble service and not as an occasion for anyone "to think of himself more highly than he ought to think." (Rom. 12:3 ff.)

7. *Unionism.* It is not in keeping with the Lutheran Confessions to maintain that when Christians are agreed on the theology of the Holy Spirit or share the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit, there exists a sufficient basis for the exercise of Christian fellowship. Although Lutherans may feel a close affinity with other Christians who agree regarding the experience of baptism in the Spirit, they are reminded that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod seeks agreement in the doctrine of the Gospel, in *all* its articles, and in the right use of the holy sacraments as the Scriptural basis for the practice of fellowship.<sup>21</sup> *All* Biblical doctrine is taught by the Holy Spirit. Unionistic worship with those who deny doctrines of Holy Scripture dishonors the Holy Spirit and fails to give a proper Christian witness to the erring brother.
  
8. *Biblical Authority and Interpretation.* Charismatic Christians generally manifest a high regard for the authority of Holy Scripture and frequently display an impressive knowledge of its contents. This can only be commended. However, caution needs to be observed by charismatic groups lest they in practice come to depend more on charismatic speech than on the Biblical word.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, many charismatic Christians give the impression that they read the Scriptures more from the perspective of Spirit baptism than from the Christ-centered, soteriological perspective that is central in Lutheran theology. While all Christians need to become more keenly aware of the rich Biblical testimony to the person and activity of the Holy Spirit, it should not be forgotten that the primary purpose of the Spirit's work, including the inspiration of Holy Scripture, is to make men wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.
  
9. *Miraculous Healing.* The charismatic movement has brought about an increased interest in miraculous healing. Today many testimonies are being given by Christian people to the effect that God has healed their ills and cured their sicknesses without the use of medical help, solely in answer to their prayers and by the laying on of hands. As these instances multiply and these testimonies increase, the question is being raised: What shall the church say to the claim that healing miracles are being performed among God's people also today by the power of the Holy Spirit?



Christians will remember, of course, that the Scriptures record numerous examples of miraculous healings in both the Old and the New Testaments. It is clear from the gospels that healing the sick was an important and integral part of the ministry of Jesus; and when the Savior sent forth His twelve apostles into the cities of Galilee, He gave them specific instructions that they were "to preach the kingdom of God and to heal" (Luke 9:2). Soon thereafter, when He appointed seventy others and sent them ahead of Him, He told them also to "heal the sick . . . and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you'" (Luke 10: 8-9). According to the Book of Acts the miracles of healing in the early church continued at least for a time even after the Savior's ascension into heaven.

It will also be granted that God can choose to perform mighty works in and through His church even today. Miracles of healing are not inherently impossible or absurd. The church must not deny the supernatural nor reject the possibility that God can intervene in the course of natural things as He did in apostolic times.

There are, however, a number of additional facts that must be taken into consideration as we explore the Scriptures in this regard.

- a. As we noted earlier, the disciples performed miracles of healing in response to a specific command of Jesus that they should both preach and heal. When the Savior gave His final instructions prior to His ascension to the right hand of God, He said: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matt. 28:19-20)

Neither this Great Commission nor our Lord's other instructions mention miraculous healing as part of the function of the church down through the ages until the return of Christ. To be sure, God may still give His gifts of healing to the church today. Moreover, the church will continue to engage in healing ministries as part of its effort to show love and compassion to all men. But the church's primary responsibility is to seek the salvation of the sinner through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Even the healing miracles performed by the apostles after Pentecost were not the result of an explicit directive of Jesus. Their purpose was not only to gain a hearing for the Gospel at a time when the church was being established but to demonstrate that the new age had dawned in Jesus Christ. In the Book of Acts the pattern is that miraculous healings decreased in number as time passed, while the proclamation of the Gospel came more and more into the foreground of apostolic activity.

- b. It needs to be remembered that God wants Christians to concern themselves with the physical needs of their fellowmen. The Bible gives many directives in that regard, and the church seeks to carry out the will of its Lord by praying fervently for healing in times of sickness and by using the earthly means that God in His goodness has provided for the healing of the physically and mentally distressed. It gratefully acknowledges as a blessing from God the healing ministry performed by doctors, nurses, and others who are skilled in the care and treatment of disease. The Christian will also seek personally to alleviate the sufferings and quiet the pains of his fellowmen to the extent that this is possible.
- c. The child of God is grateful to his Lord when he is spared physical distress and affliction, but he also recognizes that illness and misfortune in general do not represent man's greatest evil, nor is physical health and prosperity man's greatest good. Many a believer has learned that there can be a victorious faith in Christ when there is no bodily healing and a glorious witness to the grace of God in the midst of suffering. Therefore, while the Christian prays for healing and earnestly hopes for recovery, he nevertheless submits patiently to the will of God since he knows that all things work together for good to them that love God.
- d. The child of God is also aware that he is not yet in the realm of glory where sin and pain will disappear. Instead, he recognizes that according to the good and gracious will of God he is in a world where sin, sickness, and death are still very evident. He knows that the kingdom of God has been inaugurated, and in this he rejoices, but the final victory has not yet been consummated. Christ has atoned for sin, but its earthly consequences still remain. For the Christian these are chastenings, and he takes seriously the Biblical exhortation: "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by Him. For the Lord disciplines him whom He loves and chastises every son whom He receives" (Heb. 12:5-6). We do not assume that it is the will of God that even in this life we must be free of all anguish and physical distress, for pain and suffering can also be a blessing from God. (Cf. Rom. 8:28.)
- e. The Christian does not expect to manipulate or control God, even with his prayers. He would hesitate to have in his own hands the power of life and death. With the psalmist he confesses: "Thou art my God. My times are in Thy hand" (Ps. 31: 14-15). In both joy and sorrow, the Christian knows that God does not abdicate. While He graciously invites us to seek His face in confident prayer, He and His will remain sovereign. The child of God prays confidently and persistently but with the provision "Lord, if it is Thy will."

### *B. The Primary Issues*

As the church seeks to resolve the tensions that have arisen within its midst because of the charismatic movement, it is essential that the primary issues be clearly defined and understood. It should be noted that the basic question is not whether the Holy Spirit bestows marvelous gifts on His church also in the present day. Nor is there disagreement regarding the fact that the church should earnestly and fervently petition Almighty God to give us a full measure of His Spirit. What, then, are the issues? It cannot be denied that such questions as the following are very important, particularly for those involved in the charismatic movement, and that they merit our careful study:

- a. Does Holy Scripture teach that baptism in the Holy Spirit is a second encounter with the Spirit, separate and distinct from conversion and baptism in the name of Jesus?
- b. Is baptism in the Holy Spirit an experience that the Christian can have only if he meets certain preconditions, such as a conscientious desire for Spirit baptism, total surrender to Christ as Lord, a special degree of obedience, or fervent prayer for this gift?
- c. Does Holy Scripture clearly and unmistakably designate speaking in tongues as the usual manifestation of baptism in the Spirit?
- d. Does the Bible contain the specific promise that the same extraordinary charismatic gifts that were given to the apostolic church will be granted to God's people today?

Important as such questions are for the consideration of the charismatic movement, we believe that the primary issues from the perspective of Lutheran theology are the following:

1. *The Centrality of the Gospel.* Lutherans have always agreed that the central and most important teaching of Scripture is the Gospel, which brings the good news that the sinner is justified by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith. This is the doctrine by which the Christian church stands or falls. It is the article of faith in which all the sacred truths of Scripture converge. Neo-Pentecostal theology, with its special emphasis on baptism in the Holy Spirit as a second major experience in the Christian's life, sometimes tends to be more Spirit-centered than Christ-centered (in practice, if not in theory). This in turn lends itself to an understanding of the person and work of Christ that obscures His glory and benefits.
2. *The Power and Sufficiency of the Means of Grace.* Lutherans have always believed that through the Word and sacraments the Holy Spirit bestows on the believer *all* the blessings and spiritual gifts that are ours in Christ. The view that God gives His Holy Spirit apart from the "external word" is rejected by the Confessions as "enthusiasm." Neo-Pentecostal theology, with its emphasis on



the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a new source of power and assurance for the Christian and with its claim that God communicates directly with believers through prophecy, visions, tongues, or other means, easily leads to a practical (if not theoretical) diminution of the significance of the means of grace.

3. *The Unity of the Church.* Lutherans confess that all who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are one in Christ and one with each other. We therefore reject improper distinctions between members of the one holy Christian church (cf. Gal. 3:28). Moreover, Christians are "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). Although the charismatic movement is sometimes described by its proponents as fostering the unity of the church through the baptism of the Spirit, the fact remains that neo-Pentecostal theology, with its distinction between Spirit-baptized Christians and other Christians, tends to create disharmony and disunity within the Christian church.
4. *The Nature of Spiritual Gifts.* Lutheran theology has stressed the importance of such fruits of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness rather than extraordinary charismatic gifts. Moreover, it has emphasized that all fruits and gifts of the Spirit are given by grace alone. It has not understood the Scriptures to say that Christians are to expect extraordinary charismatic gifts in all ages of history, nor has it taught that speaking in tongues is the usual manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Neo-Pentecostal theology, with its claim that extraordinary charismatic gifts are the normal expectation of the church in every age, places greater importance on such gifts than the Scriptures do. Moreover, certain neo-Pentecostal accents sometimes give the erroneous impression that God's gifts are at least partially dependent on human efforts.

#### C. Recommendations

1. *Study the Scriptures.* In facing the issues raised by the charismatic movement within the Lutheran Church, we should earnestly seek the edification and spiritual welfare of the whole body of Christ. To that end, pastors and laymen should diligently and prayerfully study God's Word and its exposition in the Lutheran Confessions. Only by means of the Word and the Spirit will we be able to discern between what is true and what is false, what is God's will and what is man's. Subjective experience and human emotions are never safe guides in spiritual matters. Where God's Word speaks, Christians will submit in all humility and in the fear of God.

Our studies must deal not only with those passages in Mark, Acts, and First Corinthians that speak of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, but with those activities of the Holy Spirit that are described in other books of the New Testament such as the Gospel of John and the epistles of Paul to the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and Colossians.

In our study, we must seek to gain a new appreciation of the nature of conversion and the effects this divine act produces in the hearts and lives of men. It must concentrate anew on the Gospel as a source of strength, peace, and joy in the life of the Christian. It must see again the rich benefits and blessings that God bestows through the Word and the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Prayerful study needs to be given to those passages of Scripture that describe the church militant in its struggle against all the forces of evil in this world. It must be recognized anew that the kingdom of God has been inaugurated but not yet consummated. In this world of sin the church will continue to exist in a state of lowliness and at times even of persecution. God does not promise us miracles by which to escape the evils of the day, but He does assure us of His gracious presence to the end of time (Matt. 28:19-20) and promises that the church will be preserved and will grow through Word and sacraments. It will live in the hope of an imperishable and unfading inheritance in heaven (1 Peter 1:3-9; Eph. 1:1-14; Rom. 8:14-39; 2 Tim. 4:18). In this hope the Christian will find joy and peace as he endeavors to serve his Lord with the abilities and talents the Spirit gives. (1 Peter 1:6)

2. *Admonish and Encourage the Brethren.* As members of Christ's body who are sincerely interested in the spiritual well-being of our brethren, we should admonish and encourage one another with love and patience. When offense is given because of conduct or doctrine that is contrary to God's Word, care should be taken that proper brotherly procedures are followed and that the reasons for admonition or discipline are fully understood. Christian admonition and discipline are always evangelical and have as their goal the restoration of the brother.
3. *Test the Spirits.* Christians who are convinced that they have received a charismatic experience should earnestly seek to evaluate it and determine its validity not only on the basis of personal feelings and emotions but especially in the light of God's holy Word. Followers of the Lord Jesus must take seriously the warnings of Scripture to "test the spirits to see whether they are of God" (1 John 4:1), lest we be led astray into a path that is injurious to our Christian faith and hope. Scripture particularly urges Christians to test occurrences that give the appearance of being valid signs and wonders, with the reminder that in the last days false prophets will arise who will seek to lead God's elect astray by such means. (Matt. 24:24, Mark 13:19-23; 1 Cor. 14:29)

Scripture suggests various ways in which Christians may test the spirits that have gone out into the world. (a) What do they say with regard to Christ? Do they steadfastly and clearly bear witness to His divine person and His work of salvation? Do they give greater attention to the cross and resurrection of our Lord than to various phenomenal experiences? (b) What fruits do they pro-



duce within the Christian congregation? Do they fulfill the simple service of Christian love among the people of God? Do they help edify the church, the body of Christ? (c) Do they accept what the Spirit of God teaches through His prophets and apostles in Holy Scripture? Do they accept what the apostle Paul has written "as a command of the Lord"? (Cf. 1 Cor. 14:37. Note that the apostle states in the next verse: "If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.")

4. *Edify the Church.* The Christian will also exercise all spiritual gifts that God has given him in a spirit of love and humility, fully aware that spiritual pride or undisciplined enthusiasm may cause serious offense to the body of Christ. Recognizing that spiritual gifts may be abused, the child of God will employ the gifts that God has given him with tact and Christian love, always endeavoring to edify the body of Christ and to exalt the Lord.
5. *Know the Spirit.* The rapid and widespread growth of the charismatic movement in our day may indicate the church's need to devote much greater attention to the work of the Holy Spirit. Christians today will particularly benefit from a more detailed articulation of Christ's promises regarding the Holy Spirit as these are set forth in Holy Scripture. As the church in our age prays with new earnestness, "Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord, Be all Thy graces now outpoured," it will also make every effort, particularly in its preaching and its various programs of instruction, to increase the church's awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the Holy Spirit and His gifts.
6. *Use the Word and Sacraments.* The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod should be alert to the fact that the charismatic movement within our own as well as other church bodies did not arise out of a vacuum. In the opinion of many Christians, it has arisen to meet a pressing need within Christendom to use every resource available in the service of Christ and His church and to claim the power that God promises us through the Holy Spirit in Word and sacraments. As we face the questions raised by the charismatic movement, we must earnestly endeavor to intensify and increase our use of Word and sacraments at every level of our existence so that the church may have a renewed sense of the joy, peace, and power God has promised.

#### NOTES

1. In the preparation of this document, the commission consulted a number of books and articles. The following were found to be particularly helpful:

Bruner, Frederick Dale. *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970.

Christenson, Larry. *Speaking in Tongues and Its Significance for the Church*. Minneapolis: Dimension Books, 1968.

*Christian Faith and the Ministry of Healing*. A statement prepared for the Church Council and approved for circulation to congregations of the American Lutheran Church (July 1965), pp. 12–15.

Hoekema, Anthony A. *What About Tongue-Speaking?* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966.



- Lensch, Rodney. *A Missouri Synod Lutheran Pastor Is Baptized in the Holy Spirit*. Selma, Calif.: Wilkins Printing and Publishing, 1969.
- McDonnell, Kilian. "Catholic Problems in Evaluating Pentecostalism." *Dialog*. 9 (Winter 1970), 35-54.
- Reports and Actions of the 2nd General Convention of the ALC*. Columbus, Ohio, 1964, pp. 148-164.
- Schweizer, Eduard, and others. "Spirit of God." *Bible Key Words*. Vol. III. Translated from Gerhard Kittel's *Theologisches Worterbuch Zum Neuen Testament*. New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1960.
- Sherrill, John L. *They Speak with Other Tongues*. Westwood, N.J.: Revell, 1965.
- Stagg, Frank, E. Glenn Hinson, and Wayne E. Oates. *Glossolalia*. Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1967.
- Williams, J. Rodman. *The Era of the Spirit*. Plainfield, N.J.: Logos International, 1971.
- The Work of the Holy Spirit*. Report of the Special Committee on the Work of the Holy Spirit to the 182nd General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1970.
- Wunderlich, Lorenz. *The Half-Known God*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963.
2. *The New Pentecostal Charismatic Revival Seminar Report*. Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, 1963, pp. 16-18.
3. Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), p. 54.
4. Rodney Lensch, *A Missouri Synod Lutheran Pastor Is Baptized in the Holy Spirit* (Selma, Calif.: Wilkins Printing and Publishing, 1969), p. 14.
5. "Five Factors Crucial to the Growth and Spread of a Modern Religious Movement," in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. VII (Spring 1968), 30.
6. Ibid. See also *The Work of the Holy Spirit*. Report of the Special Committee on the Work of the Holy Spirit to the 182nd General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1970, p. 49.
7. "Final Progress Report, Glossolalia and Mental Health," a mimeographed report shared with the commission by its authors, Dr. John Kildahl and Dr. Paul Qualben. Page references in parentheses are to this report. The authors report that their findings will be published in a forthcoming book entitled *Glossolalia: The Practice of Speaking in Tongues*.
8. The information in this paragraph was provided by a group of Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod pastors involved in the charismatic movement. They met with a committee of the CTCR in St. Louis on July 19, 1971, and provided additional information in writing.
9. The following statements were prepared on the basis of such Lutheran sources as booklets, position papers, essays, tape recordings, and personal interviews. It needs to be understood that the formulations are our own and that not all Lutheran charismatics necessarily hold all these positions. Among the Lutheran sources used in preparing this section are the following:
  - Christenson, Larry, *Speaking in Tongues and Its Significance for the Church* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1970), especially pp. 81, 87, 115, 134.
  - , "Come, Holy Spirit," *Loaves and Fishes* (June 1970)
  - Dorpat, D. M., "Prophecy, Preaching, and Enthusiasm: A Study of the Gifts of the Spirit in the Light of the Lutheran Confessions."
  - , "Luthercostals. A Look at Some Issues in the Charismatic Renewal from a Lutheran Perspective."
  - Heil, Robert, *A Position and Guidelines for Immanuel Lutheran Church, Crystal City, Missouri. Concerning the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and Its Attendant Gifts*. pp. 1-2.
  - Kellogg, John P., "The Baptism with the Holy Spirit," a conference paper presented to the Midland Circuit of the Michigan District, April 1968, pp. 4-5.
  - Lensch, Rodney, *A Missouri Synod Lutheran Pastor Is Baptized in the Holy Spirit* (Selma, Calif.: Wilkins Printing and Publishing, 1969), pp. 26-28.
  - Tape-recorded essays from the Lutheran Charismatic Conference, May 18-21, 1971, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri.
10. D. M. Dorpat, "Prophecy, Preaching, and Enthusiasm," a mimeographed essay distributed by the author, pp. 1, 10.

11. *Lectures on Galatians, 1535*, Chapters 1–4. Volume 26 of *Luther's Works*, translated and edited by Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), pp. 204–206.

12. When the prophet Isaiah rebuked the drunkards of Ephraim, they mocked his repeated admonitions. Thereupon, Isaiah warned them that God would speak to them in a *foreign tongue* (the Assyrians—cf. Deut. 28:49). When Israel would not listen when God spoke to them in their *own* language, God spoke to them "with stammering lips and in a foreign language" (Is. 28:11). It is striking that, immediately after referring to the above words of Isaiah, St. Paul says, "Tongues are a sign, not for believers, but for unbelievers" (1 Cor. 14:22). Coupled with the observation that tongues may give outsiders the impression of madness, Paul's use of Isaiah 28 appears to be a suggestion that the Corinthian church should be sufficiently mature (v. 20) to recognize that speaking in tongues (especially when overemphasized and accompanied by lovelessness and disorder) may be a sign of God's displeasure with Christians who have lost confidence in the power of the Word when proclaimed in ordinary human language and who feel that charismatic demonstrations are more effective media of the Spirit's presence and power.

13. Theodore Engelder, *Popular Symbolics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), pp. 69–70, note 3.

14. This opinion is based on the evidence in some of the most reliable manuscripts, as well as early Latin and Syriac versions, which do not include these verses. It is also supported by the Armenian, Ethiopian, and Georgian versions, as well as by such early church fathers as Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome.

15. The concept and experience of a "spirit" is not uniquely Christian, nor is it necessarily a mark of the knowledge of the true God. In the Old Testament, it is sometimes associated with idolatry, wizardry, false prophecy, and the like (cf. Deut. 18:9–22; 1 Sam. 28:8; 1 Kings 22:21–24; Is. 8:19–20; 28:7; Jer. 23:23 ff.). The false spirits against which St. Paul and Saint John contended were spirits that assumed the name of Christ but in reality made Him incidental by substituting various experiences for the event of the cross and resurrection as the way to the knowledge and wisdom of God. See 1 Cor. 1–3 (especially 1:4–7, 2:2, and 3:11); 2 Cor. 11:4, 13; 1 Cor. 12:3; 1 John 4:1–3; and 5:6–12.

16. Luther's emphasis on the role of the means of grace as the instrument of the Spirit is well known. See, for example, his comments on Gal. 3:5 (cited above in II, A, 5).

17. The commission is aware that many Lutheran charismatics share some of the concerns we express in the following paragraphs. We are discussing these matters not to imply that all Lutheran charismatics accept the points we criticize but because the widespread use of non-Lutheran literature by Lutheran charismatics, as well as unfortunate emphases by some Lutheran charismatics, strongly suggest that a word of caution is in order.

18. Dr. Francis Pieper states that God "builds up, maintains, and governs His church *exclusively* through His Word and the Sacraments, by which He creates and preserves faith in the Gospel through the Holy Ghost, and for the administration of which He gives His gifts to the church." In *Christian Dogmatics*. Vol. II (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), p. 388. Emphasis added.

19. Smalcald Articles, III, viii, 9–10, in *The Book of Concord*, ed. T. G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 313.

20. Large Catechism, IV, 76, in *The Book of Concord*, pp. 445–446.

21. Cf. Formula of Concord, Epitome, X, 7, in *The Book of Concord*, p. 493.

22. It is not uncommon for charismatics to claim that God speaks directly and authoritatively through charismatic speech. J. Rodman Williams (in *The Era of the Spirit* [Plainfield, N. J.: Logos International, 1971]), for example, states that such speech goes "beyond the words of Scripture" and is not "simply some exposition of Scripture," for "the Spirit as the living God moves through and beyond the records of past witness, however valuable such records are as model for what happens today" (p. 16). He notes that those gifted by the Spirit not only "unfold mysteries about the ways of God" but may also provide "a word of guidance in economic, social or political affairs" (p. 22). He describes "prophecy" as "the very Word of God" with the same "Thus says the Lord" character as the words of Isaiah or Jeremiah (pages 28–29). He acknowledges that there must be a "weighing of things said" and states that such judgment is to be carried out by the "Spiritual community" (p. 22; cf. also note 8, pp. 29–30). Such statements are difficult to reconcile with the Lutheran position that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule and norm for Christian faith and life.

In this connection, it should be noted that the Scriptures provide no basis for the notion that the ongoing Christian community, because it has the Holy Spirit, is an "inspired" source of divine truth in addition to the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures. Such a view in fact reduces the authority of the Scriptures by exalting the authority of the church.