

Pentecostal Movement???

DRUNK IN THE SPIRIT?

The alleged revival which is occurring in various charismatic circles today is characterized by strange unscriptural phenomena such as uncontrollable laughter, slaying in the spirit, shrieking, uncontrollable jerking, and SPIRITUAL INEBRIATION. A father of this movement, Rodney Howard-Browne, calls himself the "Holy Spirit bartender."

One of the current headquarters for this "revival" is the Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida. John Kilpatrick is the pastor. Speaking before a meeting of the Peninsula Florida District of the Assemblies of God in November 1996, Kilpatrick testified that he has been so "drunk in the spirit" that he has run his automobile into that of his youth pastor and that he has hit many garbage cans which were sitting on the curb of the road. "He said that his wife has been so drunk that she couldn't cook. He has been so deep in his drunken stupors that he has to be taken from the service in a wheel chair" (*The Inkhorn*, January 1997). Kilpatrick claims that he feels like 10,000 pounds when the "glory of the Lord" comes upon him. He has testified that "at night they would wheel us out and my son would drive us home. He called himself the designated driver. And my daughter-in-law would undress my wife and my son would undress me and put us to bed. We wouldn't move all night long. It was like we didn't even have to go to the bathroom" (*The Plumbline*, April-May 1997).

Friends, this is not the Holy Spirit; it is the spirit of delusion.

The so-called drunkenness in the Spirit is nowhere to be found in the Scriptures. Those who promote the laughing revival grossly abuse the passage in Acts chapter 2 in an attempt to prove that the Apostles were drunk in the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. This is nonsense. Those who said the disciples were "full of new wine" were the mockers who wanted to debunk the miracle of tongues which was occurring (Acts 2:13). The mockers did not say the disciples were drunken because they were staggering about and slurred in speech and falling to the ground, but because of the many languages which were used to preach the Gospel that day and because they wanted to slander the apostles. In his reply to these mockers, PETER PLAINLY SAID THEY WERE NOT DRUNKEN (Acts 2:15). In Ephesians 5:18 Paul CONTRASTS drunkenness with the filling of the Spirit. The drunk is not in control of himself but is under the power of a foreign substance. In contrast, the Spirit-filled Christian is entirely in control of himself under the direction of the Holy Spirit. There is absolutely no case in the New Testament of the Lord Jesus Christ or the Apostles or early Christians staggering about in a drunken stupor, unable to attend to necessary duties, as those in the laughing revival are experiencing. THE CHRISTIAN IS COMMANDED TO BE SOBER AT ALL TIMES (1 Thess. 5:6,8; 1 Tim. 3:2,11; Titus 1:8; 2:2,4,6; 1 Pet. 1:13; 4:7; 5:8). If for no other reason, I would reject the laughing revival on this basis alone. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

"HOLY" LAUGHTER AND THE BIBLE

The following is from an article "Holy Laughter or Strong Delusion" by Warren Smith of the Spiritual Counterfeits Project:

Last summer, after watching Rodney Howard-Browne on TBN I consulted my concordance to see if there was any biblical precedent for "holy" laughter. Surprisingly, I found only 40 references to laughter in the Bible--34 of them were in the Old Testament, while only six were in the New Testament. Of those 40 references 22 referred to scornful laughter--as in Nehemiah 2:19. Nehemiah said, "They laughed us to scorn."

Of the 18 remaining references to laughter, seven referred exclusively to Abraham and Sarah's initial disbelief and ultimate astonishment that God would give them a child in their old age.

Barely into my study on laughter and I was already down to my last 11 references.

In Job 8:21 Bildad, one of Job's false comforters, wrongly advised Job that if he were in right standing with God he would be prosperous and full of laughter. The Psalmist in Psalm 126:2 recorded that when the captivity of Zion was over, "then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing." Proverbs 29:9 says, "If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest."

With only eight references remaining I had seen nothing in the Bible up to this point that suggested anything even resembling "holy laughter. In Ecclesiastes 2:2 Solomon says, "I said of laughter, it is mad." Ecclesiastes 3:4 says, there is "a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance." Ecclesiastes 7:3-4 says "sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth." Ecclesiastes 7:6 says, "for as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of a fool; this also is vanity." Ecclesiastes 10:19 says that "a feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry."

Interestingly the Bible's last three references to laughter--the only three references to authentic laughter in the New Testament--warn against laughter. These three references actually seemed to underline Solomon's contention in Ecclesiastes that "sorrow is better than laughter" and that now is a time to weep and not to laugh. In Luke 6:21 Jesus says, "blessed are ye that weep now; for ye shall laugh." In Luke 6:25 Jesus says, "woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep." James 4:9 tells us not to laugh but to "be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness."

I had searched the scriptures to find any biblical precedent for "holy" laughter and there was none. To my amazement, I had discovered that there were surprisingly few references in the Bible to any kind of laughter, period. Did this mean that God doesn't have a sense of humor or that people in the Bible never laughed? No. It just means that

laughter apparently wasn't something that God chose to emphasize very much. And certainly Jesus' last words on laughter--"woe unto you who laugh now!"--were not ones that would seem to give any encouragement to a "laughing revival" (Warren Smith, "Holy Laughter or Strong Delusion").

Laughing Revival

The "Laughing Revival" which is sweeping through many churches began in 1993 under the ministry of South African evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne. During an extended meeting in the Carpenter's Home Church in Lakeland, Florida, in May of 1993, the phenomena which has since been associated with this movement--the uncontrollable laughter, the drunkenness, the slaying, etc.-were manifested. An article in *Charisma* magazine for August 1993 described the meeting in these words:

"It wasn't long before a few folks were rolling in the aisles-literally. ... Most of them, when asked to testify, bowed over in laughter and couldn't say a word. ... A Hispanic pastor from Tampa, after he approached the microphone, began laughing so hard he fell on the floor. He was still lying there when the morning session ended at 2:30 p.m. Falling on the floor was a common occurrence that afternoon. Falling on the floor was a common occurrence that afternoon. More than a thousand people formed a line in the church's expansive circular lobby so that Howard-Browne could touch them and impart a dose of Pentecostal joy. Few were left standing after the evangelist passed by. He said they had been 'overcome' by the power of God. Thousands more people arrived for an evening service, nearly filling the main floor of the 10,000-seat facility. They came from Georgia, Texas, Canada, even Sweden. They represented a variety of churches, including Methodist and Nazarene. The front pews were reserved for dozens of ministers, including a delegation of Episcopal priests. As in the morning session, the audience laughed so loud during Howard-Browne's sermon that he finally put down his Bible and joined in the fun" (*Charisma*, August 1993, pp. 61,62).

Since the summer of 1993 the Laughing Revival has been spread throughout the world. Practically every issue of *Charisma* magazine contains a report on this. It has been endorsed by many of the well-known charismatic leaders, including Oral and Richard Roberts, Kenneth Hagin, Marilyn Hickey, Karl Strader, Kenneth Copeland, Charles and Frances Hunter, Paul Crouch, and David Mainse. One church in Toronto has been holding Laughing Revival meetings six nights a week for two years, and thousands of people from around the world have attended these services and have spread the phenomena back to their respective homes. The largest Church of England congregation in London is caught up in the Laughing Revival. Many pastors in the Baptist Union of Great Britain have accepted the Laughing Revival. It has been accepted by the

Assemblies of God in Australia. The International Renewal Network to promote and coordinate this movement.

Revival evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne (who calls himself the "Holy Ghost Bartender") held well-attended meetings in London, England, this winter. According to *Charisma*, March 1996, hundreds of British church leaders went forward during the meeting when he invited pastors to receive prayer. "Howard-Browne then swept along the lines of pastors shouting, 'Fire!' at each delegate. An army of associates had to run to keep up with him, trying to catch people who were falling." A typical experience was described in these words: "In a drunkenlike state, John struggled to get back on his feet, unintentionally entertaining onlookers in the process."

IT IS IMPORTANT TO EXAMINE THE ROOT OF THIS MOVEMENT. RODNEY HOWARD-BROWNE DESCRIBES HIS FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH THE "LAUGHTER" IN ONE OF HIS BOOKLETS. Consider the following excerpt:

"I got desperate during that prayer meeting in July 1979 and made a decision. I said, 'God, tonight is my night! Lord, either you come down here and touch me or I'm going to die and come up there and touch You.' ... I started shouting, because I shout when I get desperate! ... I shouted, 'God I want your fire! Let the fire fall here tonight like it did at Pentecost!' ...

"The Spirit was poured out on me that night. I shouted for about 20 minutes. I didn't give up, even when my voice began to get hoarse.

"Suddenly, the power of God hit me at the top of my head and went all the way down to my feet! It felt like liquid fire-like someone had poured gasoline over me and set me on fire. My whole body was tingling.

"The best way I can describe it is that it was as shocking as if I had unscrewed a light bulb from a lamp and put my finger in the socket. I knew it was God.

"When it hit me in my belly, I began to laugh the Holy Spirit comes out of your belly, not out of your head. Your head says, 'What are you laughing at?' Your head says, 'Shut up!' It bubbles. It was so overwhelming, I couldn't stop it, and I didn't want to stop it. ...

"The next minute, I was weeping for no reason. I got drunk in the Spirit, like the people on the Day of Pentecost. I was walking around laughing at nothing, weeping at nothing, and speaking in other tongues, first one and then the other.

"Fire was going all through me. I'd go up to someone and touch them and they'd fall to the floor. Then I would weep even more, because the power of God came on me even stronger.

"I thought the experience would only last about an hour. One day, two days, three days went by. By the fourth day, I was getting worried! Now I wasn't praying, 'Send the fire' anymore; I was begging, 'Lord, please lift it! I can't bear it anymore!'" (Rodney Howard-Browne, *Manifesting the Holy Ghost*, pp. 13-17).

Howard-Browne claims this was the foreshadowing of Laughing Revival which began two years ago through his instrumentality. On the authority of the Word of God, we reject this experience and the false doctrine which has flowed from it. The Apostles did not tell the churches to seek a new Pentecost. That was a unique, one-time event which fulfilled prophecy. Just like the Cross was a one-time event, and the Resurrection of Christ was a one-time event, the day of Pentecost was a one-time event with abiding consequences. At the appointed time, the time prophesied in Old Testament Scripture, the Holy Spirit came upon the church assembled at Jerusalem. He did not come in answer to the prayers of those gathered; He came in fulfillment of prophecy. The Christians spoke in other languages to the Jews which were gathered together in that city for the annual feast, thus fulfilling prophecy that with other tongues God would speak to "this people" (1 Cor. 14:20,21; Isaiah 28:11,12).

When Howard-Browne prayed for a new Pentecost and demanded that God give him an experience like that of Pentecost, he was praying contrary to the Word of God. Howard-Browne had no authority from the Word of God to demand such an experience. God acts according to His own Word, and to pray for something which the Bible does not promise is presumption, which is a great sin. The Bible says, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). The Bible is our sole authority for faith and practice. The experience described by Howard-Browne is not a Scriptural experience. There is nothing in the New Testament Scripture indicating that the Apostles or the early Christians were overtaken by uncontrollable laughter, or that they were "slain in the Spirit," or that they staggered like drunk men.

Beware, friends, and consider the Apostle's warning. "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him" (2 Cor. 11:3,4). We need reviving from the Lord continually. We need His power and His holiness and His zeal. We need His sanctifying power in our individual lives and homes and churches. It is too easy to be worldly and carnal and powerless and fruitless. But we must pray for and seek His blessing according to His Word, not according to our own thinking or according to some experience that we desire. We must have the genuine Holy Spirit described for us in Scripture, not a wild fire spirit. The Bible does not exhort us to make spiritual leaps

through strange experiences. Rather, it exhorts us to "GROW in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). It exhorts us to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may GROW thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2).

Those who have the Lord Jesus Christ, have the Spirit of God. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9; see also Eph. 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:21,22; 1 Jn. 2:27). The Bible says we receive the Spirit of God by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:14; see also John 7:38,39). In Ephesians 1:14 the Apostle explains the process of salvation plainly. First a person must hear the Gospel, then he must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, then he is sealed with the Holy Spirit. After we are saved and have the Spirit of God, we are not told to seek the Holy Spirit. Not once do the Apostles instruct the churches to seek the Spirit of God, or to seek to be baptized with the Spirit, or to seek to be blessed by the Spirit. Rather, we are instructed to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18), which is to yield to the Spirit of God that He might have His way in our lives, to be controlled by, guided by, empowered by the Spirit of God. There is nothing here about encountering some strange extra-scriptural experience which we can brag about. Paul taught no one to seek an experience with the Spirit. What he taught, rather, was a humble obedience to the indwelling Spirit of God day by day through reading and obeying the Word of God. This might not be very exciting for the flesh and it might not be very charismatic, but it is very biblical. And it is a solid spiritual foundation in a confused and wicked hour.

THE PENSACOLA "OUTPOURING"

The Charismatic Laughing Revival, also called the Toronto Blessing, is sweeping across much of the Pentecostal-Charismatic world. Since June 1995, one of its centers has been the Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida. *Charisma* magazine calls this the "Pensacola Outpouring." It began in June 1995, under the ministry of Evangelist Steve Hill. Hundreds of thousands of people have visited the services since then. Special nightly meetings are held Wednesday through Saturday. One travel agent said her company books flights or reserves rooms for more than 1,000 visitors each week.

THE PHENOMENON

The phenomenon at Pensacola is the same as that manifested in Toronto and in Rodney Howard-Browne crusades--uncontrollable laughter, Spirit slaying, shaking, etc. The pastor of Brownsville Assembly of God, John Kilpatrick, describes his initiation into the "outpouring" in June 1995. He said he fell to the floor and lay there for almost four hours. "When I hit that floor, it felt like I weighed 10,000 pounds. I knew something supernatural was happening" (*Charisma*, June 1996).

The leaders of the Pensacola meetings claim that a turning point in the "outpouring" occurred in August 1995, two months after the manifestations began. A 19-year-old female college student stood and prophesied: "God is in a hurry. There's not much more

time. He aches and He grieves for your spirit." As she spoke these words she was shaking so violently that "a casual observer might think she suffered from cerebral palsy." When she completed this prophesy, she fell to the floor. This testimony was recorded on videotape and thousands of copies have been distributed. "When churches show the clip, people often weep and fall under conviction."

THE CHANGED LIVES

According to Charisma, 25,000 people have "made decisions for Christ" through the Pensacola manifestations. We are told that drug addicted young people have given up their drugs, topless dancers have given up their immoral occupations, broken homes have been reunited, young people have burned their occultic literature and music.

Evangelist Stephen Hill says that "conviction of sin and reaching the lost--not charismatic hoopla--is what this revival is all about."

Let me say, first of all, that I do not doubt that people are being saved, and I praise the Lord for every soul who is genuinely born again, regardless of what I might think about the church that reached him. When the Gospel is preached and the Lord Jesus Christ is lifted up, God saves people. This Editor was saved through the witness of an old-line Pentecostal brother who loved me enough to spend three days with me when I was spiritually blind and following a hippie lifestyle and eastern religious philosophies. The fact that God uses a man or a church to save people does not necessarily mean that He is pleased with everything that individual or church stands for. When I began to search the Scriptures for myself as a young Christian, I was led by the Holy Spirit to see the errors of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement.

Let me also hasten to add that a "decision for Christ" is not necessarily the same as salvation. Religious enthusiasm in itself is not evidence of the truth. The Pharisees had great religious enthusiasm. Roman Catholic mystics and Mormon missionaries have religious enthusiasm. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke of those who will do many wonderful works IN HIS NAME and who will cast out demons IN HIS NAME, but they are lost (Matthew 7:21-23). Paul spoke of those who have a zeal for God but who are lost (Romans 10:1,2).

One of the Southern Baptist pastors who are participating in the Pensacola meetings is Fred Wolfe, Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, Alabama. He stated his philosophy in regard to testing spiritual movements: "It would be idolatrous for anyone to seek a sign instead of God. You're to test any phenomenon by the Word of God. Does it give the individual a hunger for God? Does it lead them to a holy life? Does it make them love Jesus more? If it does these things, it is of God."

This sounds good but it is insufficient. A "hunger for God" or a "holy life" or a "love for Jesus" is not necessarily evidence of salvation and the truth. What "Jesus" does the person love? The Apostle warned of false christs and false spirits (2 Corinthians 11:3-4). Similarly, what God does the person hunger for? Is it the God of self esteem, such as the

one preached by Robert Schuller? Is it the God of rock 'n' roll indulgence, like that preached by some contemporary rock musicians today? Is it the God of the Catholic wafer or the God who has a Queen (Mary, the Queen of Heaven)? I am saying the Bible warns us in the strongest language that religious enthusiasm itself is not evidence of the truth. The Lord Jesus Christ warned that the last part of this age will be characterized by religious deception so subtle that even the elect will be deceived if it were possible (Matthew 24:24).

I refuse to participate in or support any alleged "revival" which includes "Spirit slaying" or uncontrollable laughter or other manifestations which are so patently contrary to what we see in the New Testament Scriptures. Laughing Revival proponents say, "You are putting God in a box." That is nonsense. God has given us His Word, and it is the greatest confusion possible to think that God would act contrary to His own Word. Laughing Revival proponents say, "Don't worry about the manifestations." That is unscriptural advice. We are instructed to prove all things (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Laughing Revival proponents say, "Just open up and don't be so uptight and lighten up and let God do what He pleases." That is unscriptural. We want God to be in absolute control of our lives and churches, but it is folly and rebellion to ignore the fact that God's Word warns of false spirits and false teachers. The Apostle Peter did not advise that we open up and lighten up. He warned: "BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). To be sober is to be in complete control of oneself and not to allow any outside influence to control you. To be vigilant is to be on alert, on guard, on the outlook for enemies and deception. This is the very opposite of what the Laughing Revival tells us to do. When Vineyard pastor Ron Allen decided to go to Toronto to investigate the Laughing Revival, he claims the Lord told him, "If you go to analyze, you will end up in criticism, and I will take My Spirit from you" (End-Time Handmaidens, January 1995, p. 18). That was not the Lord of the Bible who so instructed Pastor Allen. The God of the Bible has commanded us to prove all things (1 Thess. 5:21) and to judge all things (1 Cor. 2:15). The God of the Bible has also promised that He will not take away His Spirit from the believer (Ephesians 1:12-14; 4:30).

ECUMENICAL UNITY

One of the fruits of the Pensacola "outpouring" is ecumenical unity. Charisma magazine noted, "Although the majority of visiting clergy are Pentecostals and charismatics, others from Southern Baptist, Roman Catholic and Episcopal backgrounds have been attracted by the fervor" (*Charisma*, November 1996, p. 18). Many United Methodists are also participating in the Pensacola meetings. Members of the Pine Forest United Methodist Church in Pensacola are official prayer counselors at the services.

At least one Southern Baptist pastor has led his church to leave the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) as a result of the "Pensacola Outpouring." The McCullough Baptist Church in Escambia County, Alabama, changed its name to McCullough Christian Center. Pastor Richard Daniels said local ministers pressured him to leave the SBC, "because of his Pentecostal leanings." He testified, "I don't understand how any

denomination can oppose the Pentecostal experience in this day and time--because people from all faiths are being filled."

This is a strange statement. Multitudes of godly preachers have opposed the Pentecostal experience ever since its appearance at the turn of the century. They have done so because they believe it is unscriptural. They have opposed it on doctrinal grounds. They don't agree with the teachings and practices of Pentecostalism. They have compared the claims and doctrines and practices of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement with the Bible and have been forced to reject it.

DENOMINATIONAL DIVISIONS ARE DOCTRINAL

Pastor Daniels also said, "God is destroying denominational lines." His statement was echoed by Evangelist Steve Hill. This, of course, is one of the theme songs of the Promise Keepers movement. They are breaking down the walls between denominations. This is a gross error which ignores the reason for denominational divisions. Some divisions between Christians are manmade and unnecessary, but many others, most, in fact, are doctrinal. Why, for example, is an Episcopal church different from an Independent Baptist church, generally speaking? Different doctrine. One teaches baptismal regeneration; the other teaches baptism is symbolic only. One baptizes infants; the other practices believer's baptism. One sprinkles; the other immerses. One has a priesthood; the other has pastors and deacons. One has a hierarchical church structure; the other practices the autonomy of the New Testament assembly. One interprets prophecy literally and is looking for the imminent return of Jesus Christ; the other interprets prophecy symbolically and is working to establish the kingdom of God on earth. One allows its leaders and members to hold every sort of heresy and immorality; the other practices discipline and separation.

What is the difference between an Assemblies of God congregation and an independent Baptist church, generally speaking? Doctrine. One believes the baptism of the Holy Spirit is something the believer must seek and that its manifestations are tongues and other spiritual gifts; the other believes the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred at Pentecost and that every believer has the Holy Spirit and has no need to seek a Spirit baptism. One believes the sign gifts are operative today; the other believes the sign gifts were given to the Apostles and ceased with the passing of the Apostles. One believes the Holy Spirit "slays" people; the other believes "spirit slaying" is unscriptural and demonic. One believes the gift of tongues is operative today; the other believes the gift of tongues had a temporary purpose and that its purpose ceased in the first century. One believes salvation can be lost; the other believes salvation is eternally secure. One believes ecumenical unity is the work of the Holy Spirit; the other believes ecumenical unity is the work of the devil.

Those who call for the removal of denominational divisions are ignoring these serious doctrinal differences. Why did Pastor Daniels leave the Southern Baptist Convention? Because there are doctrinal differences between him and the pastors with whom he was affiliated in the SBC. Are those pastors ungodly because they have doctrinal convictions

which do not allow them to participate in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement? That is foolish thinking. Any Bible doctrine worth believing is worth fighting for and separating over.

When Paul wrote to Timothy to instruct him in the work of the church, he did not tell him to "lighten up" and to ignore doctrinal differences. He solemnly instructed him to remain absolutely steadfast in the apostolic doctrine and not to allow ANY other doctrine to be taught.

"As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach NO OTHER DOCTRINE"
(1 Timothy 1:3).

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, THE SAME commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Many Pentecostals and Charismatics are practicing gross hypocrisy. They teach their doctrines about the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts and ecumenical unity and they expect everyone to agree with them. Those who do not support their doctrine are labeled schismatic and unloving. Why is it right for the Pentecostal-Charismatic to teach and practice his doctrine, but it is wrong for the non-Pentecostal to teach and practice his doctrine? Why is it the non-Pentecostal who is unloving and schismatic? Why is it not the Charismatic ecumenist who is unloving and schismatic for calling upon non-Pentecostals to give up their doctrinal convictions and join hands with them?

Those who have the most to lose from the ecumenical call to dissolve denominational walls are those whose doctrine is based upon the Word of God. A man who is convinced his doctrine is based on the Bible is a traitor to hold hands with those who oppose his doctrine.

SPIRIT SLAYING AND THE LAUGHING REVIVAL

September 21, 1996 (David W. Cloud, Copyright 1996, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061-0368, fbns@wayoflife.org) - "Slaying in the Spirit" is a phenomenon which has become common place in many sectors of the charismatic movement. It also plays a central role in the "Laughing Revival."

Consider the following description of a meeting conducted by Kenneth Hagin at the Winter Bible Seminar '96 on the RHEMA campus:

"Waves of God's glory swept through the sanctuary, and people broke out in Holy Ghost laughter or dancing in the Spirit. Then Brother Hagin began laying hands on various people in the audience, telling them to 'Be blessed!' He was operating under such a strong anointing that ENTIRE ROWS OF PEOPLE WOULD FALL UNDER THE POWER OF GOD

when Brother Hagin touched the first person in the row--or at times just walked by the row!

"Afterwards, Brother Hagin began to close the service--but the Holy Ghost arrested him, striking him dumb or mute by the power of God! For the next hour, Brother Hagin, unable to speak himself, walked throughout the audience, handing various ministers the microphone so the minister could speak as the Lord led him. But the moment Brother Hagin gave the microphone to someone, THAT MINISTER WAS EITHER STRUCK DUMB, FELL UNDER THE POWER OF GOD, OR WAS OVERCOME BY HOLY GHOST LAUGHTER" (The Word of Faith, RHEMA Bible Church, May 1996, p. 9).

The following commentary on slaying in the Spirit from a biblical perspective is excerpted from Nader Mikhael's book [*Slaying in the Spirit: The Telling Wonder*](#), copyright 1992, P.O. Box 65, Punchbowl, 2196 NSW, Australia --

1. IN INSTANCES OF HEAVENLY ENCOUNTERS IN WHICH PEOPLE FELL DOWN, THEY WERE QUICKLY REVIVED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, AN ANGEL OR THE LORD JESUS, AND WERE TOLD TO STAND UP. Their falling was the natural human response--they were not thrown down by force. The divine touch brought restoration to full awareness to enable them to receive God's Word or instructions and to act on them, as the following incidents show:

'And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me. And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day' (Ezek. 2:1-2).

'Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house' (Ezek. 3:24).

'Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright' (Dan. 8:18).

'Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me' (Dan. 10:18,19).

'And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid' (Matt. 17:6,7).

'And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do' (Acts 9:6).

'And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter' (Rev. 1:17-18).

2. IN THE BIBLE, THERE WAS NO HUMAN AGENT MEDIATING OR IMPARTING THE POWER OF GOD. Contrariwise, most of the time, the modern-day falling happens as people come to the front to be touched by the leader.

3. WHEN PEOPLE FELL IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN SCRIPTURE, EVERYONE REMAINED UNDER ITS INFLUENCE FOR THE SAME LENGTH OF TIME. But when people are 'slain in the Spirit,' 'Some have stayed under the power for hours. Some have stayed for just a split second!' (Charles and Frances Hunter, *Since Jesus Passed By*, Time-Light Books, Van Nuys, Calif., 1973, p. 20). In addition, in the biblical accounts, when they fell they fell together, not one after the other, and when they rose they rose together (see Matthew 17:6). **4. IN THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS THE PERSONS AFFECTED MOSTLY FALL ON THEIR FACES, OBVIOUSLY IN AN ATTITUDE OF WORSHIP.** With the slaying in the spirit, however, most of the time people fall backward and not necessarily in an attitude of worship. (When those desiring to arrest the Lord Jesus fell, it does not say that they fell backward. Rather they first 'went backward,' then they fell (John 18:6). They went backward first so that there might be room for them to fall on their faces.)

5. WHEN PEOPLE FELL IN THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS, NO ONE WAS STANDING BEHIND THEM TO CATCH THEM. God obviously knew what he was doing. Francis MacNutt tells of an incident in one of his conferences. A woman he had prayed for was slain in the Spirit and fell down on the concrete floor-- 'hitting the back of her head with a horrendous cracking noise ... Obviously injured; naturally we gathered 'round and started praying. After a while she smiled and got up, saying she would be fine. But that night her roommate came knocking at my door saying that a lump was rising on the back of her friend's head and asking if she would be lacking in faith if she took her to a doctor. I encouraged her to do that immediately. She was taken to the emergency room where she was diagnosed with concussion and was immediately hospitalized' (MacNutt, *Ibid.*, pp. 170,171).

He also tells of another incident:

'More recently [1989] a federal jury has ordered evangelists Charles and Frances Hunter to pay \$300,000 in damages to a 67-year-old woman who was hurt when she fell over backward during one of their healing services.

Evelyn Kuykendall of Maxville, North California, fractured her back and spent two months in the hospital following the accident' (Ibid., p. 171).

Francis MacNutt then added:

'I learned to be cautious and to ask for catchers to stand by anytime I think that people might fall' (Ibid.).

Note that in none of these incidents could the healers heal the injured person after the fall! When the Spirit of God transported Philip, nobody cushioned Philip's landing (if the process was actually one of transporting). When Eutychus fell from the third story (not from a standing position), Paul was able to revive him. but those who practice the slaying in the spirit, apparently feel that God needs a hand, lest someone breaks his back or suffers concussion--conditions which would apparently be difficult to heal in a healing service!

6. IN EVERY CASE WHERE THE GLORY OF GOD IS MANIFESTED IN THE BIBLE WE NOTICE THAT THE MAN OF GOD IS ALSO AFFECTED. But with those who practice the slaying in the spirit, the man of God, the preacher or the healer, never falls. If the glory of the Lord fills the place, we would expect the leader to be the first to fall. However, these leaders seem to be immune to the influence of that power. Why is this so?

Kenneth Hagin, considered to be one of the most prominent preachers in whose meetings the slaying in the spirit occurs, says that sometimes there appears what he calls a 'cloud of glory.' When it appears, he claims he does not have to touch people but as he waves his hands, rows of people fall flat on the floor (Kenneth Hagin, *How You Can Be Led by the Spirit of God*, 1987, p. 30). Even when the cloud envelops him as he preaches he remains standing, continuing to preach (Hagin, *The Glory of the Lord*, 1987, pp. 12,13). This is contrary to the biblical cases, where people could not remain standing, or where they were stunned as if dead when the glory of God was manifested.

7. THE FREQUENCY OF THE SLAYING IN THE SPIRIT IS ASTOUNDING.

Francis MacNutt says that he personally had fallen about fifteen times, but had never had a significant healing or spiritual experience (MacNutt, *Overcome by the Spirit*, p. 33). The Apostle Paul fell only once. Today, however, one person can experience this falling many times more than Daniel, Ezekiel, and Paul put together, but with no significant spiritual experience! Francis MacNutt also tells us of many instances in which people fell as he prayed for them. This did not happen only in meetings, but also in between meetings, when he didn't even have time to pray. The falling seems to happen with such ease and frequency that one cannot help but ask why it did not occur when the Lord Jesus touched people, or when Paul prayed for them?

Francis MacNutt tells of another incident in which -- "One priest who had been to a Kathryn Kuhlman meeting in Pittsburg was so sensitive to this power that he couldn't

even get near her, but repeatedly fell down in the aisle as he tried to approach the platform" (MacNutt, p. 18).

Why do we not read of anything like this happening with the Lord Jesus? No one was so full of power as He was, and yet people moved around Him and touched Him freely, without falling down! Why is it that nothing like this happened to Paul, Peter, or John?

8. IN THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS, NOT ONE CASE OF PHYSICAL HEALING OCCURRED WHEN SOMEONE FELL. Today, though, it is claimed that healing seems more likely to occur when people are slain in the spirit (MacNutt, p. 22).

SPIRITUAL VICTORY: THE LAUGHING REVIVAL WAY, OR THE BIBLE WAY

In a June 14 report, "Laughing Revival Comes to Seattle," we noted that the Charismatic Laughing Revival, otherwise known as the "Toronto Blessing" and the "Pensacola Outpouring," has arrived in Seattle, Washington. During visits to the Toronto Vineyard Church in Ontario in 1994, three Seattle pastors received the strange laughter "anointing" and banded together to hold joint weekend meetings to promote the experience they obtained from Toronto. (The Toronto Vineyard Church broke with the Vineyard association in 1995 and is now called the Toronto Airport Church.) They call these weekend meetings the Seattle Revival Center. The pastors are Darrel Stott of Lake Boren Christian Center, Steve Richard of Freedom Life Foursquare, and Wayne Anderson of International Church. They said they "got drunk in the Holy Ghost" in Toronto.

ECUMENICAL UNITY

One of the fruits of this "anointing" has been ecumenical unity and an unwillingness to critique the movement carefully by the Word of God. *Charisma* magazine noted that "IN A CLIMATE THAT ENCOURAGES UNITY, SOME PASTORS HAVE AVOIDED DISSENSION BY KEEPING PRIVATE THEIR CRITICISM OF THE RENEWAL AND ITS ACCOMPANYING TORONTO BLESSING-TYPE MANIFESTATIONS, which are occurring in some Seattle churches. Few leaders have publicly criticized churches at the forefront of renewal" ("Renewal Movement Sweeps Seattle," *Charisma*, April 1997, p. 31).

Stott said, "We're convinced that holding renewal meetings is part of GOD'S PLAN TO PUSH DOWN DENOMINATIONAL WALLS and allow us to work together to reach our city" (Ibid., p. 32).

The call for the destruction of denominational walls fails to observe that a large percentage of denominations and of individual assemblies are apostate and do not preach the faith once delivered to the saints. Do these laughing revival pastors believe God suddenly has lost interest in purity of doctrine? Why would the Lord say so much about doctrinal purity in His Word and then ignore it in practice today by calling for the walls

between truth and error to be removed? Timothy was instructed to allow NO OTHER DOCTRINE to be taught at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3). Timothy was given the truth by the Apostles and his job was to hold fast to that very doctrine and to allow absolutely no foreign doctrine to be taught. That is extremely strict, but that is exactly what we are commissioned to do today. We are to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3), referring, of course, to the body of truth delivered to us in the New Testament Scriptures.

I decided to examine the Seattle laughing revival more closely, and at the Seattle Revival Center web site I found some books advertised which contain the testimony of one of the pastors involved, Darrel Stott. I purchased two of these, *It's My Party and I Will Laugh if I Want to* and *Does the Devil Make Them Do It*. The former has a note on the cover which says, "For Drunks Only!" The latter has a note saying, "Warning: For spiritual drunks only! Reading this book can really 'mess you up!'" The books, of course, are apologetics for the laughing revival. The following is a review of these books.

STRANGE, UNSCRIPTURAL EXPERIENCES

The following is Pastor Stott's description of his experiences in Toronto in October 1994:

"I walked to the front of the church to a man who was wearing a ministry team tag. He asked me if I wanted prayer and I quickly said, 'Yes.'

"He said, 'Sir, you have really been hurt bad. Your heart is full of darts ... let me pull them out.' He took his hand and began to pull invisible darts out of me. Next, he said I was covered with dust and he took his hands and began to dust me off. I was thinking this is not the way we pray for people.

"A couple of weeks earlier, I walked into our sanctuary and prayed. 'Lord we have a beautiful new church, new homes are being built around us and yet our church is not growing. Why? I feel like I have been cursed with a curse.'

"Then the man said, 'Sir, you have been cursed with a curse ... the curse is broken.' As he prayed, I FELT STRENGTH LEAVE MY LEGS AND I WAS ON MY WAY TO THE FLOOR. It was the first time in my life that I had ever fallen under the anointing. ... THE POWER OF GOD HIT ME ON THE TOP OF MY HEAD AND WENT RIPPING THROUGH MY BODY UNTIL IT HIT MY LEGS AND THEY FLEW UP IN THE AIR. ... Then about fifteen minutes later the power of God hit me again and my legs flew in the air. This happened about six different times. ... Then suddenly the joy of the Lord fell on me and I LAUGHED UNTIL I THOUGHT I WOULD EXPLODE, ROLLING BACK AND FORTH INTO CHAIRS. ...

"I staggered back to Tony, Jerry, and Steve. ... all I knew was that I felt like a drunk and I knew I could not drive the rental car. I was the only one with the insurance. I gave the keys to Steve. ... We had not driven a mile when the joy of the Lord hit me again. My head went to Steve's lap and then down to the floor and my feet went up in the air. I could barely stand it. I felt like I was going to explode. Then the joy of the Lord hit Steve while he was driving. He quickly pulled the car off the road and jumped out of the car. ... Now Jerry was driving and he went only a very short distance. POW!!!! The joy of the Lord hit Tony in the passenger's seat. God obviously had sent us Jerry to be our designated driver. ... As WE STAGGERED OUT OF THE CAR and began to walk toward the restaurant, the anointing hit all of us at the same time. We went running for posts to hang on to as we laughed under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. We rested for a moment and tried again to approach the restaurant. Again the joy of the Lord hit us! POW! We again grabbed posts and went swinging around them as we laughed. It was obvious we were not going to make it into the restaurant so we piled back into the car. ...

"Let me skip over the rest of the day and take you to what happened in our second service. ... When the speaker began to preach he said he had a very serious sermon and didn't want any distractions. ... You won't believe what happened next. I felt a wonderful warm feeling on my head that flowed down my body like I had never experienced before. I felt laughter bubbling in my belly. Then I began to laugh softly and slide down in my chair ... ALL OF A SUDDEN, I DID A FLIP AND FOUND MYSELF WITH MY HEAD ON STEVE AND MY LEGS FLOPPING IN THE AIR. ...

"My father, a Pentecostal preacher for years, used to say, 'It is better felt than telt.' ANOTHER JOLT OF THE ANOINTING HIT ME AND I FLIPPED OFF MY FRIEND'S LAPS AND ONTO THE FLOOR. My behavior was not acceptable to the minister preaching. Steve told me later that the same phenomenon was happening all across the room. ...

"Monday night, after arriving back from Niagara Falls, we took some time for Bible study before going to bed. ... All of a sudden, A GIANT EARTHQUAKE TOOK PLACE. I saw the furniture go up in the air and come crashing down ... boom! ... We went to bed and all of a sudden the power of God came into the bedroom and I started shaking. I said, 'Steve are you awake?' He said, 'Yes.' I said, 'I think God is here. His presence is all over me.' ...

"Just before noon, I rode the elevator up to our room. I began to walk down the hall and I HAD A SECOND LARGE EARTHQUAKE. I QUICKLY GRABBED THE WALL AS THE FLOOR BUCKLED IN TWO TO THREE FOOT SWELLS IN FRONT OF ME. I calmed myself

and concluded that this might be something spiritual. I walked a few more feet and had a third large earthquake as the halls rolled again at the same magnitude in front of me. When I went back downstairs, I introduced myself to a man who had come to the meetings for his third time. ... I was embarrassed as I TOLD HIM I WAS HAVING EARTHQUAKE PROBLEMS AND FELT LIKE I WAS LOSING MY MIND. He said, 'Darrel, these floors are concrete and they are about eight inches thick with carpet glued on top of them.' I said, 'Yes, I believe that.' Then he said, 'LAST NIGHT THE FLOOR IN MY ROOM WAS ROLLING ALL NIGHT LONG.' I quickly gathered this was a common spiritual manifestation and I felt much better! I think God was trying to tell me He was really going to shake up my life! ...

"Pastor Wayne Anderson had told Steve and me that the 'pastors' meeting was the highlight of the week. ... When they invited some pastors to come up and share at the end, I NOTICED MY LEFT HAND BEGAN TO TWITCH AND JERK AND THEN MY ENTIRE BODY TOOK OFF VIBRATING. ... The man doing the moderating said, 'Would some of you men pick up that man in the black shirt and lay him in the aisle?' I VAGUELY REMEMBER THEM PICKING ME UP AND LEAVING ME TO SHAKE AND VIBRATE IN THE CENTER AISLE. ... Right from the beginning, Pastor Steve, whom I really 'tolerated' before coming to Toronto, began TO TAKE CARE OF ME IN MY DRUNKENNESS. ...

"From the very beginning, I noticed that when I would walk past various Asian people lying on the floor, the anointing would come mightily upon them. Then I had an interesting experience: An Asian man yelled at me from the bookstore not to look at him and when I did, the power and joy of the Lord hit him. ... Earlier in the day I had been downstairs in the men's restroom where it was cool with very few people. It was what I needed. ... I happily sat down in peace and quiet when suddenly the door burst open and two men entered laughing loudly. ... Immediately, THE POWER OF GOD HIT ONE MAN AT THE URINAL AND HE LET OUT A YELL. I could not resist seeing what was happening. I opened the door a little and watched him yelling, laughing and 'going' all over the place. In just a few seconds, the power of God hit the other man in the next stall, and me at the same time. We both began to yell and laugh. ...

"After the evening service, Tony, Steve and I were staggering down the hall back to our rooms. We met two young Asian men and when my eyes met theirs, I was immediately on the floor and so were they. We went rolling and laughing. ... People would crawl over us to get to their rooms.

...

"I came upon some people doing 'carpet time.' Across from them was a man wearing a ministry team tag ... this man crawled over by me and

touched me on the knee. When he did, SO MUCH POWER WENT THROUGH MY BODY THAT IT SHOCKED ME TO THE POINT THAT IT HURT. ... When I opened my eyes, this man was slowly crawling toward me [again] and there was no way out! I felt just like a little kid who was about to be tickled and could not get away. I folded my arms over my ribs and waited for him to touch me. He crawled over and put both hands on me. ... WHEN HE LIFTED HIS HANDS OFF ME, I GAVE A LITTLE ROLL TO ROLL OUT OF THE CORNER BUT IT WAS LIKE I WAS SHOT OUT OF A SUPERSONIC CANNON. I WENT ROLLING AT SUPER SONIC SPEEDS DOWN THE HALLWAY WITH NO EFFORT AT ALL. I had one thought going through my mind as the brick walls and people whipped past me: 'A man could get hurt doing this!' This is the truth. When I came to the main hallway, I turned, as if I were programmed, to the right and continued my rolling for about another hundred feet and crashed under some tables holding coffee pots. I was not the least bit dizzy or tired. There was no effort to it. ...

"I said to Steve, 'Let's go find Tony and get him prayed for.' We looked through the bodies all over the floor until we found Tony with his big smile and red nose. HE WAS NOT ONLY DRUNK IN THE HOLY GHOST BUT HE LOOKED PHYSICALLY DRUNK IN EVERY WAY. I said, 'Tony, Steve and I met this man with a powerful anointing and you have just got to get prayed for by him!' Off we went to try the spirit again. I was still not convinced this was God. How could this man send me rolling like that? Tony fell down after being prophesied over. I said, 'Tony, this is Darrel. Was the word he said over you right on?' He said it was the best and most accurate word he had at the conference. 'Tony, do you think it was God?' He answered, 'Darrel, I have gone down under the anointing a lot this week, but if there ever were a man that had a word of knowledge for me it was from this man that just prayed for me.' When Tony said that, it confirmed in my spirit that this was a man of God and what I had experienced was from the Lord. ...

"As I lay on the floor in the Constellation Hotel I began to think about going home. Many people had come up to me and asked how my congregation was going to respond when I arrived home. ... Then I began to think about my wife and children. How would they react when they saw me. IT WOULD BE LIKE HAVING A NEW HUSBAND AND FATHER WHO WAS DISABLED BY THE ANOINTING OF GOD. I WOULD VIBRATE, SHAKE, FALL AND LAUGH FOR NO KNOWN REASON. As I was lying on the floor thinking and praying for them, the man that sent me rolling came and stood over me. He said, 'Darrel, don't worry. What you are praying for, God has already taken care of.' Wow. This man was really reading my mail! ...

"Later on the flight [back home], Steve handed me a note. It read, 'Darrel, I cannot talk.' I laughed and said, 'Oh sure!' It never dawned on me what he was trying to communicate. Then he wrote another note, 'Darrel I really cannot talk!' THE LORD TOOK HIS VOICE AWAY like Zachariah and he was mute for 11 days. ...

"As the luggage began to go around in front of me, the joy of the Lord hit me and I bent over the luggage while shaking and laughing loudly. ... I put in a cassette tape of Vineyard music as we rode along. I WAS STILL JERKING SOFTLY ALL THE WAY HOME. People would drive up beside us and look in the window and watch me jerk. Debbie told me later that she was very concerned and did not know whether to take me home or to the hospital. I lay back and closed my eyes and put a hand of reassurance on her shoulder for some time. I could see tears slowly run down her cheeks as no one spoke. LATER SHE TOLD ME THAT WHEN I TOOK MY HAND OFF HER SHOULDER THE HEAT STAYED FOR A LONG TIME WHERE MY HAND HAD BEEN. Years before the Lord had healed her and when He did, a heat went into her body just like had come from my hand. She recognized the presence of the Lord and began to relax, knowing that whatever had happened to her husband was indeed God. ...

"The next morning, I drove to McDonalds early for breakfast. Coming back to the church, I NOTICED I WAS DRIVING 20 MPH IN A 40 MPH ZONE AND THAT I WAS DRIVING ALL OVER THE ROAD. ... My youth pastor, Trevor Ming, was leading the music. He said, 'Let's all stop and have a few moments of silence before the Lord.' At that moment the joy of the Lord hit me and I DID A SOMERSAULT OFF THE FRONT ROW AND BEGAN TO LAUGH HYSTERICALLY. ... I ENDED UP WITH MY FEET UP IN THE AIR ON THE LAP OF PASTOR WAYNE ANDERSON. Later, as I started drunkenly sharing with my congregation what happened to me in Toronto, I knew they were going to react one way or the other. ... ONE OF THE ELDER'S WIVES, GAIL HOMAN, WAS KNOCKED OUT OF HER CHAIR FOUR TIMES DURING THE SERVICE AND EVEN HAD HER FACE STUCK TO THE FLOOR" (Darrel Stott, *It's My Party and I Will Laugh if I Want to!*, Seattle: Seattle Revival Center, 1995).

Friends, this is a sad and fearful testimony. Pastor Stott, in his desperation, sought help from an unscriptural movement and was deceived by the miraculous things he experienced. The Apostle Paul warned against the uncontrolled pandemonium that is characteristic of the laughing revival. The church at Corinth was involved in abuse of spiritual things and as a result the services were characterized by disorder and confusion. This is precisely what we see in the laughing revival. The Apostle Paul rebuked such things and stated that God does not act this way. He said it is important that everything be

done decently and in order, that disorder is not of God and causes the unsaved to think we are crazy (1 Cor. 14:23,29-33,40). The true prophet of God remains in control of himself (verse 32). The Holy Spirit does not throw His people to the ground and give them uncontrollable fits of laughter or cause them to be staggering drunk. That is not how the Bible describes the joy of the Lord or the power of God. We do not see such things in the New Testament apostolic churches described for us in the pages of Scripture. We are to keep the pattern given to us by the Apostles (1 Cor. 11:1-2). When we do so, we are protected from the wildfire which the devil uses to lead people out of the right way, the extraneous signs and wonders which will characterize the end of this age (Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:7-9). The Lord warned that the deception of the last days will be so great, because of signs and wonders, that "if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:24). We believe it is possible for the elect to be deceived, at least temporarily. The Apostle Paul warned the church at Corinth that it was in danger of being deceived by the devil to accept a false spirit (2 Cor. 11:1-4). This is because they were carnal and were not a careful, discerning people.

DRUNK IN THE SPIRIT?

As for the so-called drunkenness in the Spirit, it is nowhere to be found in the Scriptures. Those who promote the laughing revival grossly abuse the passage in Acts chapter 2 in an attempt to prove that the Apostles were drunk in the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. This is nonsense. Those who said the disciples were "full of new wine" were the mockers who wanted to debunk the miracle of tongues which was occurring (Acts 2:13). The mockers did not say the disciples were drunken because they were staggering about and slurred in speech and falling to the ground, but because of the many languages which were used to preach the Gospel that day and because they wanted to slander the apostles. In his reply to these mockers, PETER PLAINLY SAID THEY WERE NOT DRUNKEN (Acts 2:15). In Ephesians 5:18 Paul CONTRASTS drunkenness with the filling of the Spirit. The drunk is not in control of himself but is under the power of a foreign substance. In contrast, the Spirit-filled Christian is entirely in control of himself under the direction of the Holy Spirit. There is absolutely no case in the New Testament of the Lord Jesus Christ or the Apostles or early Christians staggering about in a drunken stupor, unable to attend to necessary duties, as those in the laughing revival are experiencing. THE CHRISTIAN IS COMMANDED TO BE SOBER AT ALL TIMES (1 Thess. 5:6,8; 1 Tim. 3:2,11; Titus 1:8; 2:2,4,6; 1 Pet. 1:13; 4:7; 5:8). If for no other reason, I would reject the laughing revival on this basis alone. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

SPIRITUAL DISCOURAGEMENT

Those who accept this strange phenomenon often do so because of desperation. Pastor Stott explains that he was on the verge of complete pastoral "burn out" prior to going to Toronto—

"Adding to my frustration was the fact that I had gone through heart surgery two years earlier, to be followed by back surgery. Recovering from my physical surgeries left me emotionally worn-out. I knew of only one solution: I would not only resign the church, but I would quit the ministry entirely and go into sales. What God had called me to was not happening. I thought I was called to preach, but now I found myself physically, emotionally and spiritually burned out" ("It's My Party and I Will Laugh if I Want to," Seattle: Seattle Revival Center, 1995, p. 12).

At the urging of some pastor friends and his own father, who is a former Pentecostal preacher, Stott went to Toronto in the fall of 1994. There he experienced incredible things which convinced him God was doing a new work in his life and leading him into new things in his ministry.

This is a common testimony of those who have accepted the laughing revival. They are "burned out," discouraged, sick, downhearted, miserable, dissatisfied with the routine of life, defeated, seemingly barren. In an act of desperation they seek a touch from God in the midst of the laughing revival, and suddenly they have new enthusiasm.

WHERE IS SPIRITUAL VICTORY TO BE FOUND?

Brethren, do not be deceived by the devil's lie. There are many causes for spiritual discouragement, and there are also proper biblical solutions to this problem, but one of the proper solutions is not the laughing revival. This alleged cure is far worse than the problem!

A CHIEF CAUSE FOR SPIRITUAL DISCOURAGEMENT IS AN UNREGENERATE CONDITION. Many who think of themselves as Christians have never been born again in a biblical sense. They have been baptized and catechised but never regenerated by repentance and personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Pastor Stott, who visited a conference at the Toronto Airport Church to seek the laughter anointing, testified that most of the visitors were from Church of England, Dutch Reformed, Lutheran, and Catholic denominations. Those who grow up in such denominations are commonly in the condition just described. The Lord Jesus Christ explained to Nicodemus, a very religious and morally upright man, that he had to be born again or he would never see the kingdom of God (John 3:3,5). Christ explained that there is a birth of water and a birth of the spirit. The water birth is the natural birth. We are born in a sack of water. The spiritual birth is the second birth. It is just as real as the first birth, but it is not physical. The new birth is not a process; it is an event. A person who is born again knows it and can tell you how and when it happened. Christ went on to explain that a person is born again when he places his faith in the fact that the Lord Jesus shed His blood and died on the cross for our sins (John 3:16). It is that simple, but multitudes have not been taught this simple Bible Gospel and have thereby missed the salvation of God. Instead of confidently trusting the finished work of Christ, these are attempting to help Christ save them through sacraments, priests, churches, good works, keeping the "golden rule," etc. Those who attempt to live the Christian life without having been born again are attempting an exercise in futility, and they usually become discouraged in the process. In

such cases, the cure for the spiritual discouragement is to be born again by repenting of one's sin, rejecting false Christianity, and placing complete trust in the finished work of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ. One needs the testimony of the Apostle Peter: "Thou hast the words of eternal life. And WE BELIEVE AND ARE SURE that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:68-69). This confidence in Christ is genuine saving faith, and from such faith flows a genuine Christian life.

A SECOND CAUSE FOR SPIRITUAL DISCOURAGEMENT IS SIN AND CARNALITY: SPIRITUAL CARELESSNESS, UNCONFESSED SIN, LOVE OF THE WORLD, A DIVIDED HEART. This condition is called backsliding, and it can happen gradually and almost imperceptibly. Sin is allowed to remain unconfessed. Devotion to the Lord wanes. Love for the world enters into the heart. Spiritual zeal and burden dissipates. Bible reading and prayer are no longer a joy. Church attendance becomes a burden. The believers at Ephesus had fallen into this condition, and the Lord Jesus Christ had to warn them that they had left their first love (Rev. 2:4). The solution was to "remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works" (Rev. 2:5). Confess the sin that has been allowed to creep unconfessed into the life. Turn from it, and return to the first works of fellowship with and service to Christ. Whatever is hindering your spiritual purity and zeal, put it away. Put the Bible back into first place in your life. Dedicate your life anew to His service and be busy again witnessing for Him and pleasing Him in all things. Protect your heart from evil influences which have come in to hinder your holiness before God. Walk with the Lord throughout the day in unbroken fellowship. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading and confess your sins quickly. It is also important to seek help from your spiritual leaders and from mature and godly believers. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

There are many other things involved with having spiritual victory in the Christian life, but the point is that the Bible never offers a strange spiritual experience as victory over spiritual discouragement and impotency. The apostolic churches of the first century had many serious problems. There were all sorts of sins manifest in the believers' lives. The Apostles never instructed them to experience anything like the things we witness in the laughing revival today. **READ THE EPISTLES. THOSE ARE GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS FOR SPIRITUAL VICTORY; AND, PRAISE THE LORD, WE DON'T NEED ANYTHING ELSE.** The Bible is able to make the man of God perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (2 Timothy 3:16-17). **THE "SECRET" TO SPIRITUAL VICTORY IS NO SECRET AT ALL. IT IS GROWTH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST (2 PETER 1:3-11).** Spiritual victory is patiently, day by day, year by year, growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). There is no short cut. There is no promise from God's Word that we can attain an immediate level of perfection or be placed beyond the normal struggles of life through some strange spiritual experience. All such promises by men today are deceptions.

ANOTHER CAUSE FOR SPIRITUAL DISCOURAGEMENT IS THE NORMAL STRUGGLES OF LIFE. The fact is that God has not promised that the believer will

have an experience of perfect victory in this present life. The "normal Christian life," though blessing filled, involves discouragement, trial, difficulty, dryness of soul, pain, sickness, sorrow, conflict, seemingly unanswered prayers, routine, apparent defeat in some instances, even some uncertainty and perplexity. Consider the following verses—

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that THE WHOLE CREATION GROANETH AND TRAVAILETH IN PAIN TOGETHER UNTIL NOW. AND NOT ONLY THEY, BUT OURSELVES ALSO, WHICH HAVE THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THE SPIRIT, EVEN WE OURSELVES GROAN WITHIN OURSELVES, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Romans 8:18-25).

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, THOUGH NOW FOR A SEASON, IF NEED BE, YE ARE IN HEAVINESS THROUGH MANIFOLD TEMPTATIONS: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:6,7).

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, THERE WAS GIVEN TO ME A THORN IN THE FLESH, THE MESSENGER OF SATAN TO BUFFET ME, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. THEREFORE I TAKE PLEASURE IN INFIRMITIES, IN REPROACHES, IN NECESSITIES, IN PERSECUTIONS, IN DISTRESSES FOR CHRIST'S SAKE: FOR WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN AM I STRONG" (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

"AS SORROWFUL, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; AS HAVING NOTHING, and yet possessing all things" (2 Corinthians 6:10).

"For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of OUR TROUBLE WHICH CAME TO US IN ASIA, THAT WE WERE PRESSED OUT OF

MEASURE, ABOVE STRENGTH, INSOMUCH THAT WE DESPAIRED EVEN OF LIFE: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us" (2 Corinthians 1:8-10).

"Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. For he longed after you all, and WAS FULL OF HEAVINESS, because that ye had heard that HE HAD BEEN SICK. For indeed HE WAS SICK NIGH UNTO DEATH: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow" (Philippians 2:25-27).

"IS ANY AMONG YOU AFFLICTED? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms" (James 5;13).

"Erastus abode at Corinth: but TROPHIMUS HAVE I LEFT AT MILETUM SICK" (2 Timothy 4:20).

"In WEARINESS AND PAINFULNESS, in watchings often, in HUNGER AND THIRST, in fastings often, in COLD AND NAKEDNESS. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Corinthians 11:27,28).

We see from these Scriptures that the normal Christian life is not freedom from trial and struggle. Though redeemed, we are still subject to the pain of this sin-sick world. The perfect victory for which we long is something we hope for, not something we presently experience. When we are in glory and have our resurrection bodies, then we will enjoy the perfect experience for which we so earnestly long. Then we will be eternally free from this sin-crazed world and incessant spiritual warfare and this body of death which drags us down.

The Psalms were written to encourage us in our walk with God, and they show us that we can expect many struggles in our spiritual journey through this life. Psalm 119 is the record of the man of God who loves God's Word. It is literally filled with trial and struggle. Do not be deceived into thinking that you will be free from this experience.

"My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word" (Psalm 119:25).

"My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word" (Psalm 119:28).

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes" (Psalm 119:71).

"Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me? For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes" (Psalm 119:82,83).

"They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts" (Psalm 119:87).

"I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word" (Psalm 119:107).

"My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law" (Psalm 119:109).

"Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments are my delights" (Psalm 119:143).

"Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law" (Psalm 119:153).

"I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments" (Psalm 119:176).

Brethren, do not forget God's promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). God has not promised to remove all of our problems, but to be with us through the problems. We are not saved by sight but by hope. Hebrews describes two kinds of faith which God gives to His people at various times: overcoming (Heb. 11:29-35a) and enduring (Heb. 11:35b-38). It is not our right to demand of God what kind of faith He will give in a particular situation. In the article "My Experience with the Charismatic Movement" (which we published via the Fundamental Baptist News Service on June 17, 1997), I describe a temptation which came to me in an hour of discouragement to seek the Charismatic experience. The temptation to do so is not of God, and the experience is a deception.

17 REASONS WHY I LEFT THE TONGUES MOVEMENT

By Alfred H. Pohl

***202 - 33401 Mayfair Ave., Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 6Z2 Canada
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DEDICATION

To my wife, Minnie,
loving and loyal companion
on life's journey

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges the help of the following and desires to express his appreciation:

To those who have supported us in this ministry and made the publishing of this book possible.
To the authors and publishers whose materials have been reproduced in this volume.
To Mr. David Cloud for his much appreciated assistance in the preparation of this third printing.

FOREWORD

Many have asked, "Why did you leave the Tongues Movement?" In this book I have attempted to give my major reasons for doing so. These I present, not in a spirit of controversy, but with a sincere desire to help those who are seriously seeking a scriptural answer in these days of bewildering teaching and confusion. Should, through the reading of this testimony, someone be helped, I will be most grateful. All glory to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ!

--A.H. Pohl, Three Hills, Alberta, July 3, 1982

FOREWORD TO THIRD PRINTING

It is with sincere thankfulness to the Lord that the third printing of this book in English is needed. The response to its message has been beyond anything that I originally had anticipated. Requests for it have come from all parts of Canada and the U.S.A., as well as from a good number of countries overseas. And this is true in spite of practically no formal advertising.

Because of strong demands, a Spanish edition was printed and is now in circulation, and some other language editions are under consideration.

One Christian brother, whose letter is typical of many, wrote: "You will never know how much this book has meant to me. All I can say is 'thank you, Lord' for directing you to put this book together."

May this third printing continue to meet the needs of many, and be a blessing to every reader, in a time when there is an ever-increasing tide of confusion and deception.

—A.H. Pohl, Westbank, B.C., January 7, 1991

CONTENTS

[Reason # 1--Sincere convictions regarding their doctrines, emphases, and practices](#)

[Reason #2--An unsound biblical basis for their doctrine of the Holy Spirit](#)

[Reason #3--An over-emphasis of one gift of the Holy Spirit](#)

[Reason #4--An under-emphasis of other doctrines, particularly the cross-work of Christ](#)

[Reason #5--Their "experience" orientation](#)

[Reason #6--The undermining of the personality of the Holy Spirit](#)

[Reason #7--Spiritual pride and disunity produced by their doctrine](#)

[Reason #8--The teaching that tongues speaking is a sign of spirituality or even of salvation](#)

[Reason #9--Sign-seeking instead of faith](#)

[Reason #10--Questionable activities practiced and condoned](#)
[Reason #11--The fear of questioning the so-called activities of the Holy Spirit](#)
[Reason #12--The view that the Corinthian church was a model church](#)
[Reason #13--The danger of claiming extra-biblical revelation](#)
[Reason #14--The excesses and deceptive practices condoned in divine healing campaigns](#)
[Reason #15--The tendency to blind, unquestioning devotion to popular leaders](#)
[Reason #16--The possibility that the Charismatic Movement will be instrumental in producing the prophesied world ecumenical church of the last days](#)
[Reason #17--Their distortion of the true Spirit-filled life](#)
[Charismatics: Whither Bound?](#)
[Helpful Books on the Charismatic Movement](#)

17 REASONS WHY I LEFT THE TONGUES MOVEMENT

BY ALFRED H. POHL

After a service one evening a Christian brother, who is a minister in the Pentecostal Movement, approached me and asked, "Can you tell me in a sentence or two why you left the Pentecostal Movement?" He was asking for an impossibility! How could I condense all that was involved in a major, life-altering decision into one or two sentences? I left for a number of reasons, and just simply to itemize them without a good explanation backed up by Scripture would accomplish very little and could actually result in misunderstanding.

In this testimony I purpose not only to list some of the main reasons why I left or why I am not in the Tongues Movement today, but also expand on each one, at least to some extent, as space will allow. References made to tongues-speaking, Pentecostal, Full Gospel teachings will of necessity be more to those of the mainstream of that Movement, although there are many differing views and doctrines in Pentecostalism. This has resulted in the formation of many different Pentecostal-Tongues denominations. All Tongues people are not in full agreement on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

Some ask why I left pastoral work to engage in a traveling ministry majoring largely in teaching the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Much of my ministry now involves messages of warning to God's people. Is this justified? Is it loving to speak on this subject when feelings are very tender in this area? In answer, I suggest for your consideration the following three reasons:

1. GOD'S MINISTER MUST PREACH THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

Paul, in Acts 20:20 and 27 said: "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you," and "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." I personally believe, that, to a large extent, failure on the part of fundamental and non-Tongues ministers to teach and preach boldly and plainly the true doctrine of the Holy Spirit to our people has; a) been unfair and unloving to our congregations, and; b) in many cases has resulted in these untaught ones being ensnared in wrong teaching, and; c) has contributed to split or divided churches, etc. Let me ask you, why should we not teach the doctrines that we believe in our own churches? We owe that to our people as well as to those who might consider joining. Do they know what they are joining? That could save a great deal of heartache for all concerned later on. Certainly, we must not teach with malice but in love (Eph. 4:15). But failure to give sound teaching on the Holy Spirit to avoid hard feelings now or fearing fanaticism isn't going to cause our people to "grow up into Him [Christ] in all things" (Eph. 4:15). They will be unprepared for the winds of false doctrine that are bound to sweep over the land.

2. THE MOST LOVING THING GOD'S MINISTER CAN DO IS TO BOTH PROCLAIM AND DEFEND THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD.

This is not only my right but also my obligation! I, as God's ambassador, am responsible to teach God's people. Failure to do so may result in some of them being led astray. Who will receive the blame?

3. A TRUE MINISTER OF THE WORD MUST HAVE, ALONG WITH THE THEME OF EXALTING CHRIST, A NOTE OF WARNING.

Paul did. In Acts 20:31, speaking to the Ephesian elders, he said:

"Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Again, in Colossians 1:28 he said: "Whom we preach (that is, Christ), warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

A note of warning is an important part of the message of God's minister. It is not easy or pleasant, but essential. If I knew that the bridge down the road was washed out, and I saw you coming down the road in your car heading for danger, what kind of friend would I be if I simply smiled, waved a greeting, and shouted, "Have a good day"? We need to warn because we love God, His people, and the Word of God!

I want to make it clear that I am not a crusader against the Tongues-Charismatic Movement. Rather, I am, if you will, a crusader for the Truth. I believe that, wherever the Scriptures cut across error and false doctrine, we need to take our stand for the final authority of God's Word. This I had to do, at great cost, in my own life. I am not against Tongues people, though I can't agree with their teachings. But I am making myself available to help them and those who are confused and unsure as to what God actually has for them according to His will expressed in the Scriptures. I believe that the Lord

brought me up this road that, knowing by personal experience the pitfalls and problems involved, I might be able to help and minister to others in similar circumstances.

It is my desire also to help many to a realization of what the true Spirit-filled life really is. I believe that we, in the Tongues Movement, made a serious error by putting so much emphasis upon tongues speaking, so much so, that we missed something very important. Being so occupied with what we considered to be the evidence to being Spirit-filled, namely, tongues speaking, we, to a great extent, missed the real meaning and significance of the biblical Spirit-filled life. It is this genuine Spirit-filled life that I am concerned about and want so much to see lived by God's people today, and I'm sure that many of you share this concern with me.

TWO EXTREMES

There are two extremes, I believe, that we have to avoid: First, when there is no fire in the church—cold, formal, dead; and, secondly, when there is wildfire in the church. Which of these present the greater danger? Certainly cold, dead formalism does not produce fruit and life.

But, on the other hand, think of the harm and reproach that is produced by an unbalanced, extreme, fanatical type of church activity. A good rule to follow is: "AVOID EXTREMES!"

In 1 Corinthians 14:26 we are told: "Let all things be done unto edifying," and in verse 40 we read: "Let all things be done decently and in order." I know a little about the "wildfire" extreme, and know what harm it can do.

But it is also dangerous to slip into the other extreme of being too cold and formal. Let us remember that we are the possessors of eternal life. We believers in Christ have that "abundant life" Christ spoke of in John 10:10. Let us be reminded that there is a real, genuine, scriptural, Spirit-filled, Spirit-led, Spirit-controlled life that each of us who are believers should know in our everyday activity and experience (Eph. 5:18).

Many today are questioning and desiring greater depth and reality in their Christian lives. This is very commendable! As they see coldness and perhaps very little emphasis on the Spirit-filled life in their churches, they begin to ask whether their answer might not be in the Charismatic Movement.

It is to meet some of these needs that I am directing my ministry now as the Lord enables.

May I here just briefly suggest the solution to this problem? (I will expand on this further toward the end of this book.) The answer for these Christians will not be found in fanaticism but in a right understanding of Bible teaching on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and His work in the believer and in the church. All that we need we already have potentially in the INDWELLING Holy Spirit. Now, it is up to us to appropriate it or yield to the Holy Spirit's ministry in and through us.

The answer, I repeat, is not in the extreme of fanaticism or "wildfire."

PERSONAL HISTORY

Now for a brief view of my personal history in the Tongues Movement:

I belonged to the Apostolic Church of Pentecost of Canada, Incorporated. I was raised in it from childhood, was saved and baptized in it, ordained in it, preached in it, taught in our Bible school for five years, and was our denomination's missionary-secretary for five years—during which time I visited and spoke in most of our churches across Canada.

I thoroughly enjoyed my work and responsibilities in the Bible school, teaching the Word of God to eager young students. Along with other Bible subjects I taught Missions. I would teach in the school during the winter months and in summer I traveled and ministered in the various churches and camps in the interest of missions. My heart was in missions and I loved the work. I had the joy of seeing a goodly number of our students and others respond to the missionary call, and then to send them out to the mission fields. I was completely satisfied, and seemingly I had found my "niche" in life and in the Lord's work.

But why then did I leave?

I will endeavour first of all to list the major reasons, and then elaborate on each one. However, it will be impossible to look at each reason thoroughly in the scope of this testimony.

I LEFT THE TONGUES MOVEMENT BECAUSE OF:

- [1. Sincere convictions regarding their doctrines, emphases, and practices.](#)
- [2. An unsound biblical basis for their doctrine of the Holy Spirit.](#)
- [3. An over-emphasis of one gift of the Holy Spirit.](#)
- [4. An under-emphasis of other doctrines.](#)
- [5. Their "experience" orientation.](#)
- [6. The undermining of the personality of the Holy Spirit.](#)
- [7. Spiritual pride and disunity produced by their doctrine.](#)
- [8. The teaching that tongues-speaking is a sign of spirituality and even of salvation.](#)
- [9. Sign-seeking instead of faith.](#)
- [10. Questionable activities practised and condoned.](#)
- [11. The fear of questioning the so-called activities of the Holy Spirit.](#)
- [12. The view that the Corinthian church was a model church.](#)
- [13. The danger of claiming extra-biblical revelation.](#)
- [14. The excesses and deceptive practices condoned in divine healing campaigns.](#)
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[producing the prophesied world ecumenical church of the last days.](#)
[17. Their distortion of the true Spirit-filled life.](#)

REASON # 1

SINCERE CONVICTIONS REGARDING THEIR DOCTRINES, EMPHASES, AND PRACTICES

As I said before, I was content and happy in my work and position in the Movement. I felt at home in a fellowship that I grew up in, was accepted and appreciated, with no thought at all of ever leaving it. But as, day after day, I taught my classes in Bible School, and was confronted with serious and difficult questions from keen students, I was driven to a deeper study of the Scriptures. Gradually I became aware of serious shortcomings and discrepancies in our doctrines, emphases, and practices.

I discussed some of these disturbing questions with some of our brethren who also questioned some things. Some also finally left the Movement, but others no doubt felt the price of leaving too great. And it was a big price, as I discovered later on. I did not have any ulterior motives for leaving, I can assure you! The Fundamentalists and non-Tongues people were not about to receive us with open arms! I had no offer of churches to pastor or of lucrative church positions. On the contrary, we were in a sort of "no-man's land" for about seven years. We had left the Tongues people, being looked upon by some of them as "traitors," and the non-Tongues people weren't sure that they wanted us or could trust us. It was quite a lonely time, for in those days (1950) the gulf between the Fundamentalists and the Pentecostal was very wide. Today, in many churches and denominations there is practically no gulf at all, with resulting doctrinal confusion and no clear teaching on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

THE DILEMMA

Eventually I was confronted with a problem: Could I teach something that my denomination stood for, but which I had come to see was not according to the Scriptures? Could I teach something as truth and mislead these trusting students when I myself did not believe it? Ultimately I had to make a decision. What direction was I to take? I couldn't teach something that I didn't believe. I could not mislead others. To teach what I now saw in the Scriptures contrary to the denomination's doctrines would be very unethical. And beyond that, the thought of the final accounting at the Judgment Seat of Christ had to be dealt with. I could not go on.

At the close of the school year my wife and I left the school, my position of Missionary-Secretary, and the denomination as quietly as we could. Our objective was not to disrupt, not to damage or harm, but to leave and find a fellowship where we could serve, teach, and preach what we were beginning to see in the Scriptures, and to disassociate ourselves from methods and practices that we now felt were unscriptural. God gave us the grace to do it this way, and we thank Him for it! Much that is highly unethical was done and is being done in the name of Christ today. This ought not to be!

Many non-Christians exhibit more ethics than some Christians do! Shame on us! If a Christian does not agree with the doctrines of his church, he should not take it upon himself to undermine that church by teaching otherwise in an underhanded manner. If he cannot do this, then, I believe, he (or she) should be ethical enough to quietly leave and find a fellowship that he can fit into. But let's not break up churches!

Right here I would like to say something about "divisiveness" that is characteristic of some of the Charismatics. Why should attempts be made to take over or split churches, all in the Lord's name but not to the Lord's glory? How much heartache, strife, and hatred is generated in these attempts which purportedly should bring about a more spiritual result, when actually the real result often is Corinthian carnality and tragedy. The admonition of Ephesians 4:3 still stands today: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Almost anyone can disrupt, break up, or split a church; that usually isn't very hard to do, but it is the true work of the Holy Spirit that keeps it together. And you, Christian, have the biblical responsibility to work toward unity and harmony in your church! Are you working at it?

I have recently been in a church which was almost split right down the middle by the introduction of Charismatic teaching, with the resulting factions and strife. It was heart-rending to see the division and devastation caused, not by the Holy Spirit, for He does not work toward division and strife, but the disruption was the result of the work of our enemy, Satan!

On the other hand, a non-tongues Christian fellowshiping in a tongues-speaking church needs to be ethical, too! If he cannot agree, let him go elsewhere instead of stirring up strife within that church. I say, then, brethren, let us be careful and ethical! God will hold each one of us responsible if we break up, divide, or cause disunity in a church. It is a dangerous matter to "mutilate the Bride of Christ"! Beware! Who dares to lay his hand upon Christ's Body—the Church? (of course, I am here referring to a true Bible-believing church). I believe there will be some serious accounting called for at the Judgment Seat of Christ in this regard. Again, let's be careful and ethical!

When we left the Tongues Movement, I had prayed this prayer, "Lord, don't let me become bitter against my brethren!" I knew that the natural tendency would be to fight back when I was accused of ulterior motives or of denying the Holy Spirit or of other unpleasant accusations. But I thank the Lord that He has most wonderfully answered that prayer! In the light of the Judgment Seat of Christ I am thankful that the Holy Spirit put that prayer in my heart.

REASON # 2

AN UNSOUND BIBLICAL BASIS FOR THEIR DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Tongues people build their doctrine of the Holy Spirit largely on the Book of Acts and 1 Corinthians, chapters 12-14. The emphasis falls upon Acts and I recall my own ministry

from this book, in which I would formulate doctrine without recognizing that it was a historical book, a record of the Church's beginning and not primarily a book of doctrine as the Epistles are.

My first point, then under this heading is:

FORMULATING DOCTRINE IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

In studying the book of Acts the careful student must recognize several important characteristics of the book. Unless he does, he can come up with strange, peculiar, and erroneous doctrines, which in fact, many have done.

Consider with me the following four characteristics of Acts which I have called, "Keys to a Proper Understanding of the Book of Acts":

1. That it is, primarily, a historical book, not a doctrinal book as the Epistles are.
2. That it is a book recording the transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament, from the Age of Law to the Age of Grace—the Church Age.
3. That it is a book recording the beginnings of the Church.
4. That it is a book that primarily centers around Christ's apostles—it is indeed "The Acts of the Apostles."

My comments on each of these four keys must of necessity be brief here.

However, those desiring an expanded study may write for a set of tapes entitled, "The Four Group Receptions of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts."

KEY 1: ACTS IS, PRIMARILY, A HISTORICAL BOOK, NOT A DOCTRINAL BOOK.

On the other hand, the Epistles were written primarily to reveal and teach church doctrine. It is dangerous, then, to begin to formulate our doctrines on the historical happenings in Acts because a) there is a very real possibility that we will misinterpret the recorded happenings. Obviously, just that is being done, for we do have so many different interpretations, all from the same book of Acts. b) Because Acts is a book of transition and church beginnings, the full revelation of church truth is not yet there recorded or revealed. That is given to us in the Epistles.

In the Epistles we have the "full bloom" of New Testament revelation or church truth. That that is so, may I remind you of Paul's oft-repeated statement, "Behold, I show you a mystery." What did he mean by "mystery"?

Obviously, it was a New Testament truth not formerly revealed even in Acts but was being revealed in the Epistles. See 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Ephesians 3:1-6, etc. We must be very careful, then, to look at events in the book of Acts in and with the full light of the Epistles to guide us in formulating our doctrines.

KEY 2: ACTS IS A RECORD OF THE TRANSITION FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT TO THE NEW TESTAMENT, FROM THE AGE OF LAW TO THE AGE OF GRACE, THE CHURCH AGE.

Unless this fact is recognized we invite the possibility of wrong interpretation. When I teach the book of Acts, I usually suggest seven reasons why it must be considered a book of transition. May I just point out two of these reasons here briefly by asking these questions:

First, should a believer in the Church age be baptized before or after receiving the Holy Spirit? In Acts 8:12-17 and in Acts 19:5-6 we read that they were baptized before they received the Holy Spirit. But in Acts 10:44-48 they were baptized after. Both practices are recorded in Acts. Which is right?

Secondly, should a believer be baptized in water more than once? In Acts 19:3-5 we read that the twelve men at Ephesus who had already been baptized were rebaptized under Paul's ministry. Why? Is this to be the normal practice throughout the Church age? Or must we here recognize a transition—of Old Testament believers coming into the Church age, into the Church? As we read Acts 19:1-7 carefully, we discover that these twelve men were disciples of John the Baptist coming in transition into the church.

Paul recognized the transition, or else, why did he baptize them again? Was it not because he recognized that their first baptism in water was not a valid baptism for believers in the Church age, for "Christians"?

KEY 3: ACTS IS A RECORD OF THE CHURCH'S BEGINNINGS.

Consider this: First, God was introducing a new plan and program, and forming a new body, the Church, which did not exist in the Old Testament but had its beginnings in Acts.

What happened at Pentecost (Acts 2), Samaria (Acts 8), Caesarea (Acts 10), and Ephesus (Acts 19), is not an advance in the old body, that is, the body of Old Testament believers, but, rather, is the beginning of the new Body, the Church.

Secondly, inaugural events usually are unique, one-time events not necessarily repeated thereafter. Just as at the beginning of the Age of Law at Mount Sinai (Exo. 9:16-18), there were certain unusual events which were not repeated again, so we can expect that certain unique and unusual events which occurred at the beginning of the Church age, were not meant for duplication throughout the entire Church age.

Thirdly, events that occurred at the inauguration of the Church do not necessarily have to be adopted as the permanent pattern for the Holy Spirit's ministry throughout the entire Church age.

KEY 4: ACTS IS A BOOK THAT PRIMARILY CENTERS AROUND CHRIST'S APOSTLES.

Note the title, "The Acts of the Apostles." In it the Holy Spirit describes the prominence, the importance, and the authority of these men who were specially chosen by the Lord to personally represent Him in the completion of the laying of the foundation of the church. This is clearly expressed in Ephesians 2:20: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone."

The Lord Jesus had begun the foundation of the Church, but left the completion of that task to these chosen men to whom He gave, not only great responsibility, but also great authority and power.

To the apostles, and to those whom they authorized, were given credentials, attesting signs, the very attesting signs that Christ Himself had, to enable them to complete the Church's foundation, which, of course, relates to its beginning. That is what Paul is speaking about in 2 Corinthians 12:12: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." See also Hebrews 2:3-4.

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

QUESTION: If every Christian could perform "signs, wonders, mighty deeds," then where or what are the "signs of an apostle" that Paul is speaking about? Therefore consider: Special sign credentials were given to the apostles for the laying of the church's foundation. These "signs, wonders, mighty deeds" were meant for the church's beginnings or inauguration and not meant to be the normal pattern throughout the entire church age. Yet many are endeavoring to duplicate these things today, the things that belonged to the apostles and the church's beginnings.

In concluding this section, may I repeat that we must be careful about formulating our doctrines in Acts because it is a historical book and not primarily a book of doctrine. We must recognize its transitional character and also that it is the record of the church's beginnings as God used His specially chosen and empowered apostles to finish the foundation of the church. We should, therefore, understand the events recorded in Acts in the light of the "full-bloom" of divine revelation as given to us in the doctrinal epistles.

For a consideration of 1 Corinthians 12-14, I will make comment under REASON # 12 later in these studies.

TWO-STAGE EXPERIENCE TEACHING

Another doctrinal error, as I now see it, that is generally believed by Tongues people, and this is also largely based on the book of Acts, is that of a two-stage experience. That is, that at point "A" in time you were saved, and then at point "B," sooner or later, if at all, you experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit with tongues-speaking as the evidence. This view disregards the following:

1. In the Old Testament, believers did not receive the Holy Spirit and were not indwelt by Him as we Christians now are in the church age (1 Cor. 6:19- 20). Old Testament believers coming into the church in Acts were not experiencing a "second blessing" but actually a "first" as far as the Church or the Body of Christ was concerned. They were not making an advance in the old Body but were entering the new Body, the Church.
2. The normal Church age experience of salvation involves receiving the Holy Spirit at the moment of believing on Christ, and that until a person has received the Holy Spirit he or she does not belong to Christ and to His Body (Rom. 8:9).
3. The four group receptions of the Holy Spirit recorded in Acts (chapters 2, 8, 10, and 19) involve the first Church age experience of receiving the Holy Spirit to indwell the Church and the individual believer and not a second, for before Pentecost the Holy Spirit was not yet given (See Jn. 7:37-39).

We [in the pentecostal church] endeavored to support this two-stage experience teaching from the Book of Acts. However, a thorough study of Acts will show that this view is in error. Again, time does not allow me here to go into detail, but I will refer to one key Scripture that they use very often, and that I myself used to prove this two-staged-experience teaching. It is Acts 19:1-7. Please take time here to read this portion before you go on.

"And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve."

QUESTION: Had these men been "saved" in the normal New Testament sense of the word before Paul met them, and were they now, under Paul's ministry, experiencing a "second blessing," a baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit?

Or was this a first encounter with the promised Comforter, the Holy Spirit?

Please consider:

1. These men were disciples of John the Baptist (verses 3-4) and were coming out of the Old Testament into the Church age.

Remember that Old Testament believers did not receive the indwelling Holy Spirit. So these men, though believers as far as John the Baptist's ministry was concerned, had not yet received the promised Comforter (Jn. 14:16-18), and they indicated this in verse two when they said, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." That certainly is not the language of any New Testament Christian! They obviously were uninformed of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, etc.

2. Notice Paul's assessment of their spiritual status.

He apparently sensed some lack in these "disciples"; hence his question:

"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed [or, having believed]?" The Greek here does not indicate a time-lapse between believing and receiving. But with this question, Paul was probing whether they were New Testament believers already who had received the Holy Spirit or if they still were uninformed Old Testament saints. That is why Paul answered them as he did in verse 4:

"John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

You see, they were still on the other side of the cross and of Pentecost in their experience. And further, Paul recognized this fact by allowing them to now be baptized as Christians in the Church age.

To say then, that these men were "saved" before this meeting with Paul and then received the Holy Spirit here as a "second blessing" is far from the truth. I have a tract published by the Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, Missouri, U.S.A., which makes this statement: "The twelve men at Ephesus were saved men--'disciples'—but had not received the Holy Ghost." What an erroneous conclusion! And yet I have to admit that I myself at one time preached that way.

A final QUESTION: If these men were saved Christians before they met Paul, and had not yet received the Holy Spirit. In the light of Epistle teaching as we find it in Romans 8:9: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His," where then were these men spiritually?

Obviously then, this nineteenth chapter of Acts cannot be used honestly as proof for the teaching of a "second-blessing" experience to be normal for the church age.

THE TEACHING THAT THE BAPTISM AND THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE SYNONYMOUS

Another teaching in which most Tongues people err is that the baptism and the filling or fullness of the Holy Spirit are one and the same. But these are two different and separate ministries of the Holy Spirit. The following is from a Pentecostal church promotional brochure I saw in British Columbia (Canada) in 1978: "The baptism in the Holy Spirit is also called by other suggestive phrases—'Filled with the Holy Spirit,' 'The Gift of the Spirit was poured out,' 'The Promise of the Father,' 'The Holy Spirit came on them,' 'Enduement from on high'." This failure to distinguish between baptism and fullness, as well as between other ministries and activities of the Holy Spirit has resulted in much confusion.

Spirit baptism is referred to in 1 Corinthians 12:13 as placing us into the Body of Christ—the Church. There we read: "For by one Spirit are [or were] we all baptized into one body." This was a once-and-for-all event not to be repeated and takes place at conversion. But the filling with the Holy Spirit is not a once-for-all event but can be repeated over and over. See Acts 4:8 where Peter is said to be filled with the Holy Spirit though he was filled at Pentecost in Acts 2. In Acts 4:31 we see the whole church group filled again.

This fullness of the Holy Spirit is spoken of in Ephesians 5:18, where we are told: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." Greek scholars inform us that the phrase "be filled with the Spirit" actually means "be constantly under the control of the Spirit." The filling or fullness, then, is not just a once-for-all experience, but a constant, daily life yielded to the control of the Holy Spirit, so that the words, filled or fullness take on the meaning of "full control by the Holy Spirit."

On the other hand, the baptism is a once-for-all placing into the Body of Christ, not to be repeated. We cannot say that these two ministries of the Holy Spirit are identical. A person may be baptized with the Spirit but not filled; but he cannot be filled without being baptized with the Spirit.

Some Tongues-people also teach that there are two Spirit baptisms, one into Christ at conversion, and a second into the Holy Spirit as a subsequent experience. But this teaching is in direct contradiction of Paul's clear declaration that there is only one Spirit baptism—Ephesians 4:5.

Also consider the following:

1. Nowhere in the New Testament do we read of any Christian experiencing Spirit baptism more than once, but regarding the fullness—yes! In other words, the baptism is not repeatable but the fullness is.

2. There is no command anywhere in the Epistles that Christians should seek the baptism, but there is for the fullness (Eph. 5:18).

3. If baptism is an experience subsequent to conversion and is as important as Tongues-people insist that it is, then is it not strange that there is no reference anywhere in the Epistles to seek the baptism?

Another unsound teaching of Tongues-people should be mentioned here before we leave this section, and that is that Tongues- speaking is the INITIAL EVIDENCE of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Note the phrase, the "initial evidence." They teach that all Christians should experience the second blessing of the baptism or filling with the accompanying evidence of speaking with tongues. But this does not square with Paul's question, "Do all speak with tongues?" in 1 Corinthians 12:30, where obviously the answer is "No." To get around this they have had to invent the "initial evidence" teaching, which again is based on a questionable interpretation of events in the Book of Acts and is entirely without support from the Epistles.

There is not one clear reference in Scripture upon which they can build this particular teaching. And yet it is so basic to their whole system of belief and practice.

REASON #3

AN OVER-EMPHASIS OF ONE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Have you ever noticed how prone we humans are to go to extremes? This is especially true in religious matters. Observe how some particular doctrine or teaching is emphasized or exalted above other important doctrines. And often the very denominational name indicates this. Take for example the name, "Seventh-Day Adventist." Their name tells what they are emphasizing and consider most important, "Seventh Day" (Sabbath) and "Adventist" (Return of Christ). These are their distinctives and became the reason for their existence as a denomination in the first place. Take other names too—Holiness, Jesus Only Church, Latter Rain Triumphant Church, Foursquare Gospel, Full Gospel, Pentecostal, Charismatic, Pentecostal Fire Baptized Holiness Church, etc. Some of these advertise by their titles what their distinctive doctrines are, and which, in their estimation, are most important doctrines and practices. At least, that's how their denominations began.

It is this over-emphasis that explains in part, at least, the existence of so many denominations today. The Pentecostal-Tongues people have exalted the one gift of the Spirit, namely, the gift of tongues, above all the other gifts and out of all proportion. They have exalted it to an unscriptural extreme. In my opinion, they are making the same error that Ellen G. White of Seventh Day Adventism made. She claimed to have seen a vision in which the Fourth Commandment (that of the Sabbath) rose up above the other nine, and was surrounded by a halo of light. From this she concluded that she and her denomination should recognize Sabbath-keeping as the all-important message and doctrine of their church. And so this is where they put their emphasis. To many

Pentecostal-Charismatics, tongues speaking has become what "Sabbath-keeping" is to the Seventh-Day Adventist!

Notice this expression of extremism in the following:

TONGUES-SPEAKING, ACCORDING TO THEM, IS THE EVIDENCE OF THE BAPTISM OR FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

This is the view held by many in the Tongues Movement, but not all subscribe equally to it. I was brought up to believe this and preached it.

But this position, I found by study and observation, is untenable [not defensible]. Why?

1. If tongues speaking is THE evidence, then all other evidences—such as witnessing for God (Acts 4:31), and the Christ-likeness of life, and the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)--are ruled out.
2. Since obviously tongues speaking can be imitated, and is, by heathen, Spiritists, etc., it is a questionable evidence. Deception and counterfeit can enter in. This thought alone should make us to seriously question such teaching.

This is precisely what happened to me while I was still in the Tongues Movement. As denominational Missionary-Secretary I was visiting and ministering in our churches in Ontario one summer. While I was in one of these churches, the pastor approached me about the possibility that he and his family could go to Jamaica as missionaries. I took his application forms back with me to our headquarters in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan [in west central Canada], where I presented them to our Missionary Council.

Eventually this family was sent out to Jamaica. Not too long after their arrival there I received a letter from this brother. Part of this letter reads as follows:

"Throughout Jamaica there is a class of people known as 'Pocomania.' This word means 'half-mad or a little mad.' They believe in all kinds of superstitions and practice all manner of evil. Since they are generally very poor, they usually worship in the open air. A very common sight here is to see groups of these people beating their drums and singing on the streets and along the roads. Last Sunday evening I saw five large groups in about as many city blocks. Often you can hear their drums beating until late at night. They speak in tongues and sing our choruses, and because of this it brings a great reproach upon the true Gospel and makes the preaching of the Gospel difficult."

I was shocked, particularly by the words, "They speak in tongues." All my life I was taught and myself preached that tongues speaking was THE evidence of Holy spirit baptism, that all tongues speaking was of God, and now I was informed that heathen also speak with tongues! What was this? Had it not been that I knew the missionary personally I likely would not have believed him. But here was one of our own men telling

me this! That really got me thinking and investigating, only to discover that many non-Christians also speak in tongues—heathen witch doctors, Spiritists, Mormons, one branch of the Mohammedans, etc.

Once I spoke in a mission church at Alix, Alberta. During my message I mentioned the above incident about Jamaica. When I had concluded my message, a young man from the Cook Islands [near New Zealand], who was in the meeting that night, got up and publicly confirmed what I had said, that heathen also speak in tongues on his island.

So by the teaching that tongues speaking is THE evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the door is opened to the possibility of false or counterfeit tongues being accepted as genuine evidence of the Holy Spirit fullness. On the other hand, what better evidence is there than a transformed life, a Christ-like life with the fruit of the Spirit in manifestation: "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23)? This is difficult to imitate or counterfeit!

I also remember the excitement expressed by some Tongues people who had visited the Mormon Temple at Salt Lake City, Utah [USA]. They told me that they had discovered that Mormons, too, speak with tongues, and they had come away with the impression that there must be a close relationship between them, some kind of spiritual kinship! Apparently, if only they speak with tongues, then some false doctrine can be overlooked! And therein lies a big danger today. The modern (new) Charismatic Movement admits that there are tongues speakers who know no repentance or new birth as we know it and as the Bible teaches it.

ALSO, AS I SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES, I SAW THAT THE PROMINENCE THAT WE GAVE TO THE GIFT OF TONGUES WAS UNSCRIPTURAL

We had fallen into the same error that the Corinthians had. It was to correct them that Paul wrote his first epistle to them. He did not write to encourage them to a greater use of the gift of tongues, but, rather, to correct them in their over-emphasis and abuse of that gift. The gift of tongues is clearly one of the lesser gifts. In the list of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 it, with the sister gift of interpretation of tongues, is last in order. This is also true in the second listing in this same chapter, 1 Corinthians 12:28, where it again is last in the list. Besides, in the other two major lists of the gifts in the Epistles—Ephesians 4:11 and Romans 12:6-8--the gift of tongues is not mentioned. This should tell us something about the relative importance of this gift.

Then notice Paul's evaluation of the importance of the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14:5-6:

"I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?"

And in 1 Corinthians 14:19-20:

"Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."

We could add one more reference here--1 Corinthians 13:1:

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

Obviously, these Scriptures teach that the gift of tongues is not the most prominent of the gifts, as the Corinthians mistakenly thought (and as many also do today). It was because of their immaturity in understanding this that Paul added verse 20 of 1 Corinthians 14 to verse 19: "Brethren, be not children in understanding ..." In other words he is telling them to "grow up," to "mature." In effect he is saying, "Don't continue in your childish thinking." See 1 Corinthians 3:1-2, where he calls them spiritual "babes." He is saying, "Don't remain in a state of misunderstanding of God's purpose for giving the gift of tongues, but rather, grow up, mature!" He calls for sound and mature thinking, not for a childish preoccupation with one of the lesser gifts.

A Charismatic who encouraged everyone to seek a tongues experience was confronted with the fact that some who had experienced tongues were demonstrating no basic changes in their life-style, but were still involved in sinful practices. He replied, "Well, if tongues won't straighten out their lives, I don't know what will do it." This is an example of exalting a lesser gift to a place of supreme importance, which is entirely unscriptural. Let us, by careful and prayerful study of the Scriptures, avoid such errors and extremes that do not glorify Christ!

REASON # 4

AN UNDER-EMPHASIS OF OTHER DOCTRINES, PARTICULARLY THE CROSS-WORK OF CHRIST

The over-emphasis we placed on tongues resulted in an under-emphasis of other important doctrines. Especially was this true regarding the principal and main message of the Church—the preaching of the basic and simple Gospel of Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1- 4).

QUESTION # 1: Is there any one doctrine or message that the Church should emphasize above all others ?

QUESTION # 2: Is there a danger of becoming unbalanced, lopsided?

I believe that the answer to both questions is a definite "Yes!" This becomes clear when we study the Corinthian Epistles. In their over-emphasis of tongues they had failed to give the simple Gospel of Christ the place of supreme importance that it should have in the Church. They were majoring in the minors. They had become lopsided in doctrine and consequently in practice. This is a constant danger to the churches, even in our day. We have to be on guard constantly that we do not go to unscriptural extremes.

For an example, let me tell you what a Christian brother told me recently about an encounter that he had with a Tongues believer. This man said to my friend, "Brother, have you ever talked in tongues?" My friend's reply was "No." To this he [the charismatic] said, "Well, then, you've got nothing!"

While I, as a young preacher, was ministering in the Tongues Movement, I was informed one day that the leaders of our denomination were critical of my preaching. They said that I was preaching the cross too much and not mentioning tongues enough! That greatly disturbed me! I did want the approbation of our Elders, and I did want to do what was right. You see, I grew up under the ministry of a godly pastor who knew the Gospel and emphasized it. He loved and taught the Book of Romans and emphasized the importance of the cross of Jesus Christ and justification by faith. Now, I was being told to change my emphasis in the ministry. What was I to do ?

Once again, I was driven to the Scriptures. The Corinthian church was the great tongues-speaking church, so I began to read and study about the tongues' emphasis. But as I read I discovered that, though I was out of step with the Corinthian church, I really wasn't out of step with Paul. I read in chapter one of 1 Corinthians such verses as 18 and 23:

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness." And verse 24 continues: "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

And then when I got to chapter two, verse two, I read these words of Paul to the Corinthian church:

"For I determine not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

I was greatly relieved and encouraged. I might have been "Out of step" with my denominational leaders but I was "in step" with Paul! I was in good company! For obviously Paul was dealing with the very problem that I was facing.

Did you notice where Paul put his emphasis? Yes, he was determined that nothing, not even tongues speaking, would take the place of the all-important message of the cross—the simple but powerful Gospel of Christ!

Now please note the words "among you" (1 Cor. 2:2). Paul was writing this to the great tongues-speaking church of his day. (Incidentally, tongues speaking is not mentioned as occurring in any other of the churches to which epistles were written.) Paul, if he had sought popularity and an "in" with the Corinthians should have mentioned the cross plus tongues (perhaps he should have called it the "Full Gospel"?), but he didn't! He was "hewing to the line." To Paul the "preaching of the cross" was all-important, and nothing was to detract from it. But in doing so, he made himself one of the most unpopular preachers to the Corinthian church. I think I know a little about that too—"He preaches the cross too much, and doesn't mention tongues enough"!

In his second letter to the Corinthians, chapter 11, verses 3-7, Paul again reminds the Corinthians of the importance of the simple, basic "Gospel of God" in a church's faith and proclamation. We read verse 3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Notice his words, the simplicity that is in Christ. It is, I repeat, the perennial temptation for a church to drift away from this simplicity of the Gospel and add to or subtract from it. Let us beware! Paul then goes on to warn them about ending up with "another Jesus," "another spirit," "another gospel." Sobering words!

One more thought: Have you ever noticed where Paul places his definition of the Gospel? Yes, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, the tongues-emphasizing church! But not only that. It follows right after his thorough teaching on the gifts, and particularly his dealing with the gift of tongues in chapters 12-14. We find his gospel definition right in the beginning of chapter 15, verses 1-4. After showing the Corinthians their error of tongues emphasis, Paul now tells them where their emphasis should be.

Notice his words:

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

Notice how he begins: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel." The word "moreover" is also translated "now." Paul is saying, "Now brethren." Having just concluded his teaching about the tongues-abuse issue in their church, he is saying, in effect, "I have something more important to 'declare unto you'." Imagine Paul having to, at this point in time, declare the Gospel to the Corinthian church! You see how far they

had drifted from it by wrong emphasis. They had become lopsided, unbalanced. So Paul is forced once again to declare that simple Gospel to them that he had preached to them when he started their church.

And the simplicity of that Gospel is embodied in the three cardinal points of Paul's definition in verses 3-4: "Christ died for our sins ... He was buried, and ... He rose again!" That is the Gospel that Paul preached, by which alone sinners are saved, and which was, is, and always will be the paramount message of the Church. Satan will try his utmost to stop that message. Sometimes he uses fanaticism and wrong emphasis on the part of Christians to accomplish his ends.

Let us not disappoint our Lord by not emphasizing the Gospel or adding to or subtracting from it. For it alone remains the message of God to a lost world. With Paul (Rom. 1:16), let us always say: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

REASON # 5

THEIR "EXPERIENCE" ORIENTATION

To many in the Tongues Movement experience has become all-important, crowding Scriptural teaching into second place. Experience has become the criterion of truth. It is dangerous to build doctrine on experience. The Bible, not our experiences, is the final ground of authority.

I well remember an illustration that was used in my day in the Tongues Movement. A fundamentalist pastor had heard that a colored boy in his congregation was attending Pentecostal meetings. He took the boy aside to warn him about getting some counterfeit experience. But before he could finish his warning the young lad cleverly replied, "Too late, Pastor, me got it!" Now this answer, supposedly making and proving a point and also good for some laughter and Amens, really can be very misleading. It does not prove that the "experience" is genuine. Secondly, the experience can very easily be misinterpreted and wrongly labeled with a Bible name.

We could ask, "Is this experience really the 'filling' that the Bible speaks about?" Commenting on this, Dr. John F. Walvoord said: "The final test (of any experience) must always be what the Scriptures actually teach" (John Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, Dunham Publishing Company, 1958, used by permission of Zondervan Publishing Company).

There are experiences, experiences, and experiences. People hear voices, see visions, have dreams, have contacts with non-human beings, fall prostrate on the floor, see lights, and on and on. If we are to believe and accept every one of these as genuine and from God, and build doctrine on them, where would we be? But how then can we know the truth? There is only one way, and that is by testing everything with the straight edge of the ruler of Scripture, not with experience. The error that is often made is to have the "experience" and then try to fit it into the Scriptures and find a "label" for it.

We must also be very sure that we know what the Scriptures actually teach; otherwise, we can still fit our experiences into the Scriptures, put a Bible label on them, and go on unwittingly attributing our experiences to the work of the Holy Spirit. That this has and is being done, no one can honestly deny.

Some time ago I read of some Brazilian Christians who claimed to have received messages from God that they were to drown their children because of the terrible future they would face if they grew up into this troubled world. The deceived parents murdered their own offspring! Now I'm sure that they were sincere and convinced that the voices they had heard were from God. But they were sincerely wrong because their action was contrary to the teaching of God's Word, the Scriptures. Remember, an experience does not prove its own genuineness! Also, never bend the Scriptures to accommodate your experiences!

An evangelist spent several hours discussing and examining the basic teaching of the Charismatic Movement in the light of the Scriptures with a Charismatic lady, only to hear her say, "Oh, but my experience!" He then asked her, "Will you take the Scriptures or your experience?" But there was no clear response from her.

When one places experience on an equal footing with Scripture, a grave error is committed. Experience alone can be very deceiving. Notice Christ's warning in Matthew 7:22-23:

"Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."

Here the Lord speaks of miraculous experiences being produced by non-Christians. They had been deceived into believing, by their experiences, that they were instruments of the Lord's power when they actually were workers of iniquity. And notice also, these were using the Lord's name in all of this. Beware of deception, particularly that which is done even using the name of Jesus!

Dr. John F. Walvoord in his book entitled *The Holy Spirit* writes as follows:

"The final test must always be what the Scriptures actually teach. Experience may serve as a partial test of the conclusions, but in itself the Bible must be taken as the final authority. Experience ever possesses two fatal grounds for error: 1) a misapprehension of the experience itself in its content and divine origin; 2) a faulty conclusion as to the doctrinal meaning of the experience. Hence, on the one hand, an experience supposedly of divine origin may be purely psychological, or worse, a deceiving device of Satan

himself. On the other hand, a genuine experience may be misunderstood and mislabeled."

Too often the tongues-experience seeker is almost forced to speak in strange sounds, and when he does, that experience is then interpreted for him by some Charismatic and labeled as the "baptism." But is it? Do we take the scriptural teaching for our guide or the words of a man or woman? Dr. Walvoord states:

"We are ever prone to interpret Scripture through experience, instead of interpreting experience through Scripture. The factor of human experience is very close to some aspects of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, but experience may not be normal, and if normal may not be properly interpreted. Much harm has come through arbitrary doctrines established in the last analysis on experience rather than revelation" (John Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan).

Because "experience" is so much emphasized, there is great danger that some seek for the "experience" instead of the Holy Spirit Himself. In other words, the "gift" becomes more important than the Giver. I am greatly concerned about an expression that I heard very often: "Have you got it, brother?" What is meant by that word "it"? Could "it" refer merely to the experience? I'm afraid that is the meaning to many Tongues people today. It seems to me that the tongues-speaking experience has become a status symbol. It gives them spiritual prestige and makes them "acceptable" to their Charismatic fellows.

Another error, I believe, is the teaching that all the experiences recorded in Scripture should be the normal experience of Christians today. One man, referring to tongues speaking, endeavored to prove that this experience was for every Christian today because "it's in the Bible." Need we remind ourselves that circumcision is also in the Bible, in the New Testament, even in the Book of Acts. Does that mean that all Christians should be circumcised today? What about the "cloven tongues like as of fire" that "sat upon each of them" at Pentecost and the "sound ... as of a rushing mighty wind"? Are we to seek these experiences today because "they are in the Bible"? We would do well to take heed to the words of one Bible teacher, F.D. Taylor, Sr., who has summarized this question in these words: "All experiences in the Bible were given for instruction, but they were not all given for duplication" (F.D. Taylor, Sr., *Should I Speak in Tongues?*, Scarborough, Ontario: Everyday Publications, used by permission).

Let us never forget the importance of the teachings of Scripture. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 we read: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable [for what?] for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That [that what?] the man of God may be perfect [complete, mature, accomplishing God's purpose], thoroughly furnished unto all good works." It is the Scripture, primarily, and not experiences that can "thoroughly furnish" or equip us for effective living and service for Christ.

It was Peter who, with James and John, witnessed Christ's transfiguration on the mount (Matt. 17:1-9). What an outstanding experience this must have been for him. In his second epistle, chapter one, and verses 15-18 Peter refers to this experience. But now notice what he says in the verses immediately following (19-21). We read in part: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place ..." Was Peter building his theology or doctrine on that wonderful experience or did he have something "more sure"?

Yes, he did [have something more sure]. It was the Word of God that was given through "holy men of God" who "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (verse 21).

In effect, Peter is saying here, "I have something more trustworthy, 'more sure' than that mountaintop experience; it is the revealed Word of God spoken by the prophets in the Scriptures." The "more sure" Word of Scripture is the best and final authority, not experience.

A lady who was very much taken up with Charismatic experiences was trying to convince me recently that these were all so wonderful and genuine. I kept referring to the Scriptures and tried to show her that we must be guided by the doctrine of the Scriptures, not by our interpretation of our experiences, and that the Bible is the final authority of truth. After a while she became very much annoyed and said, "Doctrine! Doctrine! I am sick and tired of that word!" Unfortunately, she was putting experience above the Word of God. It is just this attitude and failure to recognize the Scriptures as the supreme and final authority that leads to confusion and often, spiritual shipwreck. Let's build on the solid rock of the Word of God, not on the sinking sand of human experiences and man's interpretation of them!

In closing this section, let me quote a paragraph from a Christian paper called *Listening*:

"Let it be remembered that you cannot trust religious experiences. The first awareness of the Lord, the ecstasy of worship, the physical act of water baptism, the second, third, and hundredth blessing, are all what has happened IN you. Get your confidence on what has happened FOR you. The luster of your experience fades and shines according to your health, your circumstances, your frame of mind. But what the Saviour did for you when He died on the cross, what He is doing now for you living on the throne, and all that is yours in Him never changes because it depends on Him, not on you" (*Listening*, a Christian magazine, Master's House, Box 5055, London, Ontario).

REASON # 6

THE UNDERMINING OF THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

To me it is quite clear that the Bible teaches the personality of the Holy Spirit. The personal pronoun He is repeatedly used when referring to the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, many cults deny His personality and think of the Holy Spirit merely as an impersonal force, a power or an influence, but not as a Person.

Shortly before I left the Tongues Movement a very dear Christian brother and Bible teacher pointed out to me that our denomination and Tongues people in general, were, because of our doctrine of the Holy Spirit, gradually slipping into the error of the cults. Though in theory and in our Articles of Faith we subscribed to the personality of the Holy Spirit, yet in practice we looked upon Him largely as a "Power" or an "impersonal force." Actually, to that time I had not noticed this gradual erosion in my own mind. I began to examine his warning and found that it was indeed so. I asked myself, "Why was this trend in our thinking developing?"

I believe that one of the main reasons for this was our emphasis on experience. The Holy Spirit "fullness" became a desirable experience. We became more occupied with the gift than with the Giver. This appears in the oft repeated question, "Have you got it?" or "You've got it!" Let's just analyze that statement: what did we mean by "it"? (1) If all we are concerned about is an experience, then the word "it" would be quite appropriate. And I am afraid that to many that is all that it is. (2) But if we recognize that this is a meeting with or ministry of God the Holy Spirit in us, then we can hardly use the word "it," but rather it should be "Him." There is real danger here of being more occupied with the gift than with the Giver. (3) Even if we should say, "I've got Him," do we give the right impression of what the Bible actually teaches? Really, is it a case of us having more of Him or is it not a case of Him having more of us? Does not the Scripture emphasize this, that we should yield our members, ourselves, to the control of the Holy Spirit that Jesus might be the Lord of our lives? Romans 6:13 tells us to "Yield yourselves unto God"; so also verse 19 and Rom 12:1-2. And add to that the meaning of the words "be filled" in Ephesians 5:18: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." The words be filled in Greek mean be constantly under the control of. Christians are thus commanded and expected to be constantly under the control of the Holy Spirit, or to be "led by the Spirit," or to "walk in the Spirit." The case, then, is that the Holy Spirit, who indwells every believer, should be in control of the yielded bodies of all Christians so that the Lord Jesus might be glorified through them. No, we really are not to seek a greater "portion" of the Holy Spirit, but we ought to make sure that we ourselves are completely yielded to Him, that He has all of us!

This emphasis and use of the word "it" is reflected in a Pentecostal tract that I, for some reason, still have in my possession. It is Tract No. 4285, published by the Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, Missouri, and entitled, "The Baptism of the Spirit." Let me give you just a few excerpts here to illustrate what I am trying to say:

"Down at the house of Cornelius (Romans) they received it eight years after the day of Pentecost. ... The disciples at Ephesus (Greeks) received it twenty years after the first outpouring ... Multitudes are receiving it today. ... It is for

you ... We are commanded to seek it ... Pray for it ... Praise God for it in faith..."

I believe that it is this kind of teaching that undermines and erodes our concept of and faith in the personality of the Holy Spirit. I know how it had, unconsciously, affected me.

REASON # 7

SPIRITUAL PRIDE AND DISUNITY PRODUCED BY THEIR DOCTRINE

By the very nature of their doctrine of the Holy Spirit the door is opened to the possibility of spiritual pride entering in, and for the tongues speaker to think of himself as being spiritually superior to the brother who has not had a similar experience. Though this feeling is generally not openly expressed it is there, nevertheless. I have observed this many times, both in my years in the Movement and also since I left. In case someone might think this to be an unfair appraisal, let me quote from a tract that I have before me right now, written by a well-known Pentecostal minister, R.E. McAlister, and published by the Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, Mo. It is Evangel Tract No. 251.

"It is admitted by Bible students the world over that speaking with tongues as the Spirit gives utterance is a sign. Suppose we ask the question, 'Of what is it a sign?' The answer is found in God's own Word, for we find the sign accompanied the reception of the Holy Spirit when God standardized New Testament Christian experience. It follows logically, then, that only those who have spoken in tongues can lay claim to a normal New Testament experience. All others, regardless of what they profess or claim, ARE BELOW PAR." (Capitalization mine)

So with the teaching of a second blessing with tongues-speaking evidence comes this inevitable thought: "All others are below par." "I have arrived." "I am on a higher plane." "I am more spiritual."

This reminds me of the same attitude that was so prevalent in the Corinthian church and which Paul deplored. Just recently my attention was drawn to a phrase that Paul used several times in his first letter to the Corinthians. You can find it in chapter five, verse two. The phrase is "ye are puffed up." Six times these words appear in this epistle. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible informs us that the words "puffed up" mean "inflated." Inflated!

What a description of the spiritual condition of the Corinthian Church!

Yes, they had the gifts of the Spirit, and especially the gift of tongues, in operation in their church. They thought themselves to be "spiritual," but were blind to the fact that

"spiritual" people are not "proud." They were "puffed up," "inflated," spiritually proud, but from God's viewpoint, they are called "carnal" four times in 1 Corinthians 3:1-4. Why? Because of their spiritual ignorance (1 Cor. 12:1)--their misunderstanding and abuse of the gift of tongues particularly.

That this feeling of superiority and spiritual pride still exists I discovered not long ago. After a Sunday evening service in which I was speaking in a series of messages on the Holy Spirit, a man approached me.

He shoved the button in his coat lapel up to my face and asked if I knew what it was. I didn't answer immediately because I had taken my glasses off and couldn't focus my eyes on that button so close to my face. I tried backing up to get it into focus but he kept following me. Before I could read it he said something like this, "You don't know anything about it! If you did you would have recognized it right away." Then he tapped me on the shoulder, as he stood his full height, and looked down at me and said, "Well, I've got more than you have!" With that he turned and strode out of the church. Incidentally, the button he was wearing was that of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Association.

Not only does their doctrine and emphasis produce spiritual pride in some, but it also opens the door to disunity and division. A natural result of this tongues experience, teaching, and emphasis is to produce two groups in the church—the "haves" and the "have-nots." Perhaps we can call it "Christian class consciousness"?

No, it might not be obvious on the surface, but the problem is there. One Christian separates himself from another because he thinks that his "experience" has put him on a higher plane than the "have-not" brother. Or it may be a whole group that will separate themselves from fellow believers or one church from another church. The attitude that "we have more than you have" seems to be the underlying and basic reason for these unhappy separations and divisions. This is not simply a fundamentalist-Charismatic division, but occurs, surprisingly, too often among the Tongues people themselves. Was this not a problem in Corinth, as well. There were divisions and cliques in their church, too (See 1 Corinthians 3:1-4). All this, Paul informs us, is not a sign of spirituality but of carnality, as we read in 1 Corinthians 3:3:

"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"

REASON # 8

THE TEACHING THAT TONGUES-SPEAKING IS A SIGN OF SPIRITUALITY OR EVEN OF SALVATION

A man who had just experienced tongues speaking said that he was sure now that he was saved. We could ask the question then, "How can we really know that we are saved?"

What is reliable assurance that we have passed from death unto life? Is it a certain kind of experience? If so, can we completely trust experiences? In this case, we know that tongues speaking can and is being counterfeited. Heathen, Spiritists, Mormons, etc. also experience tongues speaking. Apparently there are Charismatics today who obviously have never repented, have exhibited no change or transformation of life, and yet are tongues speakers. Many Roman Catholic Charismatics continue to worship and pray to Mary, attend Mass, pray to "saints" etc., etc. Are we to accept them as our brethren in Christ simply on the basis of tongues speaking? Can they, or can we safely build on the foundation of an "experience"?

Basically, the assurance of our salvation must rest upon the unchanging and ever-dependable Word of God—His promises to the believer. One such promise and word from God to us is 1 John 5:13: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." How can we know that we have eternal life? This verse tells us plainly that our assurance rests upon the written Word of God.

Experiences, emotions, feelings all may change or pass away, but the solid rock of God's Word remains. By faith we rest on His promise. Did He not say: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (Jn. 5:24)?

I have heard His Word; I have believed on Him, therefore I have everlasting life! How do I know? Not because I feel something, not because I saw a vision or heard a voice, or spoke in tongues, but simply and basically because HE SAID SO! I simply take Him at His Word. I do have His Word for it! And it is impossible for God to lie (Heb. 6:18). That is assurance! Do I need more? By simple faith in His Word I received salvation. By simple faith in His Word I have the assurance of my salvation!

Certainly there will be other corroborating evidences, and these are also mentioned in God's Word, that reveal the reality of the new nature within us. There should and will be a change in our lifestyle, just as we read in 2 Cor 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

This is more fully developed in the epistle of 1 John where we read such words as these: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 Jn. 3:14); and, "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments," that is, His Word (1 Jn. 2:3). If we really know the Lord, there will be a change of attitude toward God's Word, and a developing love for it and obedience to it. We will desire to do God's will. But time does not permit us to pursue this topic further here.

IS TONGUES SPEAKING EVIDENCE OF SPIRITUALITY?

Secondly, is tongues speaking an evidence of greater spirituality? Really, now, how can we know that we are spiritual? Can everything be based on a once-for-all, a once-in-a-lifetime experience? Is that the whole proof? Or is it possible that there will be evidences of an inward spirituality manifested in our daily walk and living?

To take tongues speaking as the evidence of a Spirit-filled, Spirit-controlled spiritual life is to disregard the teaching of 1 Corinthians.

Please notice that the Corinthian believers came "behind in no gift" (1:7).

They had the gifts of the Spirit in their church and laid particular emphasis upon the gift of tongues as we see it in chapters 12-14. Yet, in spite of all this, Paul calls them "carnal" four times in chapter three.

And "carnal" is the opposite of "spiritual". Besides this, Paul reminds them that they had contentions, divisions, fornication, quarrels, disorders at the Lord's Table, etc., in their church that all their tongues speaking could not cover. They were carnal in spite of it. Then, we might ask, what were they missing?

They did not realize, as many also don't today, that spirituality is not determined by the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit, but by the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit! That is why, I believe, Paul "sandwiched" the "Love Chapter" (ch. 13), between the two chapters dealing with the gifts, chapters 12, 14. It wasn't that he changed the subject and suddenly decided to write about love, but, rather, he is trying to show the Corinthians, so taken up with their emphasis on tongues, that they were missing the "more excellent way" (12:31), that they did not have the fruit of the Spirit in their church and in their lives. They were missing the fruit of the Spirit which is the evidence of the indwelling Holy Spirit actively producing Christlikeness in the life of the believer, in other words, the Spirit-filled, controlled, fruitful, spiritual life.

Paul begins chapter 13 with these words: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophesy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing."

What is love? It is the basic fruit of the Spirit Gal. 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Though I once believed and taught that tongues speaking was the evidence of being Spirit-filled and of spirituality, in the light of the teaching of God's Word, I had to completely change my viewpoint.

In closing this section I want to point out briefly what I now believe the characteristics (or evidences) of a Spirit-filled, spiritual Christian really are:

- 1) A crucified, self-denying life (not just a one-time experience, but a LIFE), Gal. 2:20; 6:14.
- 2) A surrendered life—submissive, yielded to the Lord. The will subjected to His will, Romans 6:13, 19; 12:1-2.
- 3) A Christlike life—Gal. 2:20b; Rom. 8:29.
- 4) A fruitful life—the fruit of the Spirit in manifestation, John 15:5,8; Gal. 5:22-23.
- 5) A life effective in Christ's service and witnessing—Acts 1:8; 4:31.
- 6) A life that glorifies God—John 15:8; 1 Cor 6:20.

Here are two more Scriptures that should be considered in this connection:

Matt. 7:20: "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them," and John 13:35: "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Please note that it does not say, if you speak in tongues or have some gift in manifestation in your life, but "love," the basic fruit.

This is also the clear teaching of 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

REASON # 9

SIGN-SEEKING INSTEAD OF FAITH

At this moment of writing I have before me a clipping from the church page of the *Calgary Herald* [Calgary, Alberta, Canada]. It is a Charismatic church advertisement for services—with great emphasis on miracles. One meeting is called "Nite of Miracles." The word miracles appears four times in this one ad. And there are others like it. Why this emphasis on miracles, on the spectacular and on the sensational?

I am reminded of the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 12:38-40: "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from Thee. But He answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah: For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Jesus said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign !" This sign seeking certainly does not have God's approval! Why? Notice how the Lord continues here in verses 39 and 40. Yes, there was one sign that they should be occupied with—that was the sign of Jonah which pointed directly to the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord

Jesus. That is the great sign that God gave to the world that many generations have and are overlooking.

In 1 Cor. 1:21-24 Paul deals with the very same issue, and is in total agreement with Christ. Notice how he expresses it: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

In verse 22 he says: "The Jews require a sign." So what does Paul do about it? Does he produce signs and wonders to meet their craving for them? No!

Though Paul could and did do so as an apostle in God's timing, not simply to satisfy curiosity and cater to the demand for the spectacular (see 2 Cor. 12:12), but to authenticate his apostleship and his message when required. But here to these sign-seekers he has but one sign, verse 23:

"But we preach Christ crucified!" And in chapter two verse two he says: "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

The Christian is not to be preoccupied with signs, wonders, and miracles, but with Christ's work for him on the cross and with His Gospel. That alone is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (1 Cor. 1:24; Rom. 1:16). The Corinthian error, which is being perpetuated today, was that they majored in the spectacular to the exclusion of the simple, yet wonderful and powerful Gospel of Christ that centers in the cross work.

Charismatics talk about "power" in their meetings—manifested in the miraculous and unusual. But is that the "power" that saves men's souls? Only the Gospel of Christ can do that!

Furthermore, the Christian is to "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). But the miracle-seeker wants always to see! Remember the lesson that the Lord taught Thomas, who, too, had said: "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails ... I will not believe." Jesus replied:

"Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed " (Jn. 20:24-29). Genuine faith rests in God's Word, not on sight.

The ultimate danger of sign and miracle-seeking lies in the fact that in the last days Satan will employ the miraculous to deceive the multitudes, culminating in the deceptions of the Antichrist and the False Prophet.

TAKE NOTE OF THESE WARNINGS:

1) Christ's warning in Matt. 24:24: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Evidently, "signs and wonders" can and will be performed by false Christs and prophets. How many are and will be deceived by them?

2) The warning of 2 Thess. 2:8-12: "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

It appears that the basic tool of deception employed by the Antichrist will be his miracle-performing powers. How effective this will be is seen today by the unscriptural appetite of so many for signs, wonders, and miracles.

Could it be that they are being prepared for the great deception that we read of here and also in Revelation chapter 13?

We might well ask ourselves why the Lord will permit this powerful deception. The answer, I believe, is right in this passage in 2 Thess. 2. In verses 10 & 12 we find these phrases: "Because they received not the love of the truth" and "who believed not the truth." Twice the word truth appears here. God permits this powerful deception, this "strong delusion," to sweep over a people who have neglected and rejected TRUTH—God's Word, the Scriptures, and Christ Himself, Who is the TRUTH (Jn. 14:6). Because they have not put the Scriptures where they belong—in FIRST PLACE, but have run after the spectacular, the miraculous, the sensational, to satisfy their unscriptural craving for these things, God sends them "strong delusion, that they should believe a (the) lie."

Dear reader, our recognition of the supreme authority of God's Word (Truth) is all-important! Doctrine is important! Stay close to the Book, the Bible!

All experiences, signs, wonders, miracles must be subject to the Scriptures. Our faith must be based on the unchanging eternal Word of God.

In connection with this thought I suggest that you also read Revelation 13:11-18.

In conclusion, turn to John 4:46-54 where we find the beautiful record of the healing of the nobleman's son. When the father approached the Lord for his son's healing, the Lord said to him (verse 48): "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." Why did

he reply like this? I believe it was to test the father—was he like most of the Jews were, sign-seekers, or did he have real faith that could stand on the bare Word of the Lord?

Then, when the Lord simply said (verse 50) "Go thy way; thy Son liveth," he just took the Lord at His word. The verse goes on to say: "And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way." How beautiful this simplicity of faith! He did not ask for a sign that his son was healed. He simply believed the statement of the Lord Jesus, without any signs. How this must have pleased the Lord Who was constantly harassed by sign-seekers! May we, too, be found in the ranks of this nobleman! Remember Hebrews 11:6.

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

REASON # 10

QUESTIONABLE ACTIVITIES PRACTISED AND CONDONED

Writing to the Corinthian church, Paul the apostle said: "For God is not the author of confusion," and "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:33,40). Having grown up in the Tongues Movement, I didn't see the import of these words as I do now. For at that time the activities in our churches were quite normal to me; they were part of that which I had been taught from childhood and up to be right and proper. But as I look back now, and in the light of these and other Scriptures, I feel ashamed of some of the proceedings, methods, and happenings that I witnessed. Even at that time I was shaken at times by what I saw.

One of the very common happenings was what we used to call "falling under the power," or to use the more refined phrase used today, "slain in the Spirit." When it involved ladies who lay prostrate and sometimes struggling on the floor, they were quickly covered with coats or blankets to prevent them from uncovering themselves. This practice is still followed today.

It is very difficult to reconcile this type of thing with the Scripture, "Let all things be done decently and in order." If these people are really "slain by the Holy Spirit," it is indeed strange that the same Holy Spirit that gave us the Scripture should go contrary to the Scriptures that He gave! This cannot be.

THREE QUESTIONS ABOUT "SPIRIT SLAYING"

But we must ask ourselves, is this practice and experience scriptural ?

Here are three questions to consider:

1) Is there any clear statement in the Epistles to support it? To my knowledge there is no doctrinal teaching there that does.

2) Is there any clear record of this happening in the biblical history of the early Church—in the Book of Acts?

Where do we see this "laying on of hands" upon believers resulting in large numbers falling to the ground or to the floor? Some refer to Saul's experience on the Damascus Road (Acts 9). But Saul, or Paul, was not a believer at that time, but, rather, a persecutor of Christians. He was being "arrested" by the Lord! Besides, no one had laid hands on him before he fell to the earth. Some others refer to John 18:6 where those who came to take the Lord Jesus captive "went backward, and fell to the ground." But these were definitely not coming to the Lord to be blessed or healed, they were, in fact, "enemies" coming to arrest Him. They were not believers, nor did they have hands laid on them. Compare this event with Psalm 27:2: "When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell."

3) Is there any scriptural evidence that an evil spirit can do such a thing ?

Yes. In Luke 4:35 we read: "And when the devil [or demon] had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not." So also in Luke 9:42:

"And as he was yet a coming, the devil [or demon] threw him down, and tore him". There is ample evidence that devotees of evil spirits, such as witchdoctors, undergo similar experiences and certainly not by the Holy Spirit.

Also consider this: Often in healing prayer lines, people who come for healing just "fall under the power" or are "slain in the Spirit." Instead of being healed (that's what they came for), it appears that they are simply "side-tracked." Where is the scriptural basis for this practice?

This is not what happened when the sick came to the Lord or to His apostles!

Remember this, experiences should not automatically be accepted as from God the Holy Spirit simply because they take place in a church or in a religious environment! Any spirit manifestations that are not related to a deep conviction of sin and genuine repentance should be questioned in the clear light of Scripture.

It is true, however, that in the history of church revivals, there were those who were under such deep conviction for their sins, and in a genuine state of repentance, that they fell to the ground before the Lord. I personally heard Brother Duncan Campbell, the Scottish revivalist of our century, tell of a young woman who was instrumental in organizing a dance for the youth of her community on the first night of Mr. Campbell's revival meetings in her town. This, of course, she did in opposition to the meetings. But the Holy Spirit brought her under such conviction of sin that she came rushing into the

church after the service was over and collapsed before the Lord at the altar. No hands were laid on her. It was a genuine ministry of the Holy Spirit.

There are examples of prostration in fear, humiliation, and repentance in the Scriptures as well, but what is happening in some areas today seems to be of a different character, largely man-made and manipulated. All such manifestations that are not related to a deep conviction of sin and true repentance, and do not stand the test of Scripture, particularly the Epistles, should be avoided. "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good," is God's Word, and is so very helpful to us here (Rom. 12:9).

Further, in the area of seeking the tongues experience, it is deplorable to what extremes some will go. Over-emphasis of the value of the tongues experience has brought with it a variety of questionable methods to produce it. It appears that some are so anxious to speak in tongues that they will try almost anything to cause it to happen. Either the seeker or the person praying with him, or both, are often responsible for the methods employed.

Here are a few of the questionable methods that I observed:

The seeker, praying or praising the Lord in an audible voice, is shaken by the hands of those praying for him. The result is a vibration or quiver in the seeker's voice. "That's it, Brother" or something similar is the encouragement the seeker hears as he seemingly gets nearer to the "experience." But worse yet, the sight of a seeker having his jaw manipulated by some over-zealous helper to distort the words of the seeker and produce unusual sounds, is sickening, yet often practised. Then there are those who "teach people to speak in tongues." Repetition of certain phrases must be practised, sometimes at accelerated speeds till proper language is lost, and unintelligible sounds result. Cassette tapes to teach experience-seekers how to "speak in tongues" are available. What biblical basis is there for "teaching" believers to speak in tongues? It is completely foreign to the New Testament concept of the gift of tongues. In the three instances of tongues-speaking recorded in the Book of Acts (chapters 2,10,19), there is no hint of the recipients having first to be "taught how to speak in tongues."

NEW WAY TO SPEAK IN TONGUES

One other method that I witnessed and which disturbed me very much, though I was still wholeheartedly in the Tongues Movement, comes to mind.

In a series of special meetings held in a certain church in Saskatoon, Sask., the evangelist had a "new" way to get people to speak in tongues.

After the message of the evening he called for all seekers to come forward and be seated in the front pews. Then he briefly explained what procedures they would follow. It would be different than the conventional methods we usually used. This was his theory: "The seeker needs to initiate the sound, that's his responsibility, and the Holy Spirit's responsibility is to take that sound and produce the tongues sound from it."

He quoted the Scripture: "... Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" (Psa. 81:10). Then he urged all the seekers who were seated, and not kneeling, to put their heads back and open their mouths, and then make a sound. He suggested that they simply say "Ah-h-h-h"—to draw out the sound and keep on repeating it. It was a strange sight! For someone raised in the Tongues Movement even this was too much. Here were several rows of adult people sitting, heads back, mouths open, all saying "Ah-h-h-h..." And the evangelist and the pastor were walking back and forth down the rows, laying hands on them and to some extent shaking them to get a quiver into their sounds, then encouraging them to get louder and to "let go!"

And, by his standards, he was successful in getting some strange and peculiar sounds out of some of the seekers, which he labeled as "tongues speaking." But I had to ask myself, "Was this 'as the Spirit gave them utterance' (Acts 2:4), or were these 'man-made tongues'?"

But this wasn't all. What really startled me, and caused me to begin to think very seriously about this type of procedure, was what I witnessed a few minutes later. One dear old lady, a seeker, seated on the front pew against the wall, was praising the Lord and praying in her accustomed way, when the evangelist came back down the row of seekers to where she was. He discovered that she was not saying "Ah-h-h." So he made it very plain that he wanted her to say nothing but "Ah-h-h." She began, but by the time the evangelist had gone back down the row and returned to her she was once again back to praising the Lord and saying, "Jesus, Jesus, etc." Then to my utter amazement, I heard him say to her, words to this effect, "Lady, I told you to say 'Ah-h-h'! If you don't stop praising the Lord and saying, 'Jesus, Jesus,' I won't pray with you anymore!"

Was I hearing things? I could hardly believe my ears! And lest I should make a mistake in later quoting him I took out a notebook and wrote it down.

I had to seriously ask, What is this? Is this biblical? When is it wrong to praise the Lord? Is it safe to omit the name of the Lord Jesus from my praying, especially when seeking the fullness of the Holy Spirit? Could not this kind of procedure leave the seeker open to the entrance of another spirit? Does not Prov. 18:10 tell us that "the name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." What could the seeker be letting himself open to with this procedure?

And, simply because someone produces some unintelligible sounds does not prove that it is the Holy Spirit speaking. Evil spirits can "peep and mutter" as well. Isa. 8:19 reads: "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God?" This incident opened my eyes to the dangers of using man-made methods, for the results are at best questionable, and not the product of the Holy Spirit Himself.

In searching the Scriptures we discover that tongues speaking was produced by the Holy Spirit, not man-made. Acts 2:4 states: "As the Spirit gave them utterance." And the gift of tongues, spoken of in 1 Cor. 12:11, as well as the other gifts, are given "to every man

severally as He will," not worked-up or man-produced. It is a dangerous practice to play around with tongues or to try to manufacture them. The Holy Spirit is perfectly capable of giving the gift of tongues, if He so wills, without man's questionable methods!

Paul also refers to another disorder in the Corinthian church in 1 Cor 14:27-28: "If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the Church; and let him speak to himself, and to God." There is an orderly limitation stated here. Often this is not obeyed in modern tongues meetings, and these excesses are often overlooked by the leaders for fear of hindering "the work of the Holy Spirit" or of grieving Him, or of offending someone. So confusion results.

But in verse 33 we read: "God is not the author of confusion."

In concluding this section many other questionable methods and practices could be referred to, such as catering to the sensational: sensational meetings, sensational speakers, sensational methods, advertising sensational healing and miracle meetings. Some even try to bring in the crowds by featuring child or boy-preachers, without considering the eternal harm that this might do to the child involved. Not long ago a Charismatic evangelist in Western Canada was conducting tent meetings about ten miles from our home, in which he featured a boy-preacher whose pictures adorned the colorful advertisements. I was personally invited to hear this boy-wonder. Some people got quite excited about him. There always are people who are attracted by this kind of sensationalism. But, we could ask, what are they doing to this child? How will all this popularity and acclaim affect him for time and for eternity?

In his book, *Truth About Tongues*, Dr. Hugh F. Pyle gives this information about Marjoe Gortner, a "child-preacher," who was "used" for years in this manner:

"Television and movie actor Marjoe Gortner was ordained to preach at the age of four and was billed as a boy-wonder on the miracle-preaching circuit. He preached for years. Women would swoon and fall to the floor at his touch and his command. He says now that he was just 'acting,' and that while he could have made a lot of money in the healing-revival business, he became bitter about it all by the time he had reached seventeen, and realized what his mother had done to him. Yet great crowds had faith in his power to heal by the 'laying on of hands.' Marjoe laughs about it all and says it was all psychosomatic" (Hugh F. Pyle, *Truth about Tongues*, Denver: Accent Publications).

QUESTIONS WE MUST ASK

Seriously, brethren, before we embark in new and sensational methods of doing the Lord's work, let us ask ourselves these questions first:

- 1) Is it really scriptural?
- 2) Is it edifying? 1 Cor.14:26: "Let all things be done unto edifying."
- 3) Is it decent and orderly? 1 Cor. 14:40: "Let all things be done decently and in order."
- 4) Is it glorifying to the Lord and to the Gospel of Jesus Christ? 1 Cor 10:31: "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Please note that these questions are the very ones that the carnal Corinthian Christians undoubtedly failed to ask themselves in their church conduct, for the references that I have quoted above are all from the First Epistle to the Corinthians directed to them in the very areas of their weakness and failure. May we today be careful not to make the same mistakes that they made!

REASON # 11

THE FEAR OF QUESTIONING THE SO-CALLED ACTIVITIES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

This fear would manifest itself by failure to question or judge, even though some of those activities seemed strange, out-of-place, or even wrong. I recall that on many occasions in our church services when someone would "prophesy" or "speak in tongues" that the congregation would bow their heads and listen quietly and almost fearfully. The message that was coming through was, it appeared to me, more respected than when the Scripture itself was being read. Wasn't this God speaking directly to us?

And who would dare to question these messages? But should they not be questioned or challenged? This fearful bowing to every so-called prophetic utterance should be questioned, according to 1 Cor. 14:29: "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge." Not only was there to be order in the manner of giving the messages, but there was to be a judging of the validity of the prophecy. This, to my knowledge, was rarely done. Almost slavishly the messages were received as genuine.

May I give you an example? An evangelist was invited to speak in a series of meetings in the large city church where we attended at that time. He laid claim to being a prophet, and every once in a while he would give a "prophetic" message, usually apart from his sermons. He would begin these "prophecies" in a loud, booming voice, usually with the words: "Thus saith the Lord, " or, "The Spirit speaketh expressly" or other familiar introductory words used by Bible prophets. When he began, a real quiet ensued as people bowed their heads and almost fearfully awaited this "message from God." Not once did I hear any judging or questioning by any of the leaders or elders of the church. Everything seemed to be accepted as God's truth. When I voiced some misgivings, I was looked upon as someone who was in danger of God's wrath for not receiving "the message."

On one occasion, this was in the late 1940s, this man gave a message in "prophecy" informing us that all born-again Christians, of whatever denominations, would all be united together in one church in the 1960s. And he added, "If what I am saying today does come to pass, phone me collect, and tell me that I am a liar!" I wish I had his phone number! Obviously, he was a false prophet. But I venture to say that over 90 per cent of the people there believed him, but have long since forgotten about his prophecy. The biblical test of prophets is found in Deut 18:22: "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him." Notice that the Old Testament ordered severe judgment on false prophets—it was death! Why? Deut. 13:5 reads: "Because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God."

Many times I have asked myself this question: "Why are so many Christians so gullible? Why are they so easily deceived by the clever acts of the deceiver?" And this, in spite of all the warnings in Scripture. There are at least a dozen direct warnings in the New Testament about deception.

Let's look at just three here: Matt. 24:4: "Take heed that no man deceive you." This warning by the Lord Jesus is given three times in this chapter.

Eph 4:14: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive ..." Notice the phrase, "no more children." The Lord expects us to grow up and mature so that we are not tossed and "carried about with every wind of doctrine."

And Rom. 16:17-18 issues this warning: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Notice these words here: "contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned." Doctrine is very important! These deceivers must be judged by the doctrine of the Scriptures, not slavishly believed, feared, and followed.

The fear of ascribing the work of the Holy Spirit to the Devil or demons was and is very real in the Tongues Movement. There is, of course, a biblical basis for this, Matt. 12:31-32. But to go to an extreme and let deception go unchallenged, even though we are scripturally warned again and again, is also to be disobedient and sinful!

It is true that ascribing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan is a very serious sin, but it is also a serious sin when we ascribe the works of the flesh and of Satan to the Holy Spirit! I am afraid that too much of this is done today. The Holy Spirit gets credit for many, many things that He didn't do! Brethren, let us avoid this sin too!

REASON # 12

THE VIEW THAT THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH WAS A MODEL CHURCH

Because tongues speaking is so much in prominence in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and, incidentally, is not even mentioned in any of the other twenty church epistles, it became a very important epistle to us. I personally, as I'm sure many others did too, looked upon the Corinthian church as a model in the area of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, particularly the gift of tongues.

HERE, THOUGH, LET US ASK OURSELVES SOME QUESTIONS:

1) WAS THIS EPISTLE WRITTEN TO ENCOURAGE THE ALL-OUT USE OF TONGUES, OR WAS IT WRITTEN TO CORRECT IT'S OVER-EMPHASIS AND ABUSE IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH?

2) IS EVERYTHING THAT TRANSPIRED IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH DOCTRINALLY CORRECT AND CAN THUS BE USED AS A BASIS FOR DOCTRINE BY ALL CHURCHES THROUGHOUT THE AGE?

Can we build upon their church conduct as being exemplary and such as will please the Lord? In short, should our churches today strive to be like the Corinthian church? Is it a "model" church?

I, for one, did not approach the Book of First Corinthians with these questions in mind. Because of the tongues-emphasis teaching that I was raised in, I felt and believed that we should be more like the Corinthians, for did they not have the gifts of the Spirit in operation in their church?

Chapter 1:7 tells us that they came "behind in no gift." And they, of all churches, must have been most spiritual because of the great prominence of tongues in their services, for only in this church are tongues mentioned in the epistles. They excelled in tongues speaking!

How wrong I was! Isn't it strange how doctrinal extremes can blind a person to truth! I have since learned, and not overnight, either, that I was wrong in my approach to the Book of 1 Corinthians.

Answering our questions now, first, Paul did not write this epistle to commend the Corinthians for their emphasis on tongues speaking, or to urge them to do more of the same, but rather to bring them back to a more restrained and orderly use of this gift. In fact, he urged them to major more on the "best gifts" (12:31). He said: "Covet earnestly the best gifts, " one of them being the gift prophecy (14:5): "I would that ye all spoke with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied." In 14:19 he adds these words: "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." In other words, he is plainly telling them that they were putting their emphasis in the wrong place.

Second, Paul makes it very plain in his letter that the Corinthian Christians, though they had the gifts of the Spirit in operation in their church, were nevertheless "carnal" (3:1-4). Notice a few of the "carnal" or unspiritual fleshly manifestations present in their church:

contention--1:11; division--1:10, 12, 13; carnality--3:1-4; fornication--5:1; taking one another to court--6:6-7; disorders at the Lord's table--11:17, 20-22; immaturity in spiritual matters--3:1, 12:1, 14:20; disorders in church meetings--14:40.

What does all this tell us? The lesson is plain. It is possible to have gifts and yet be unspiritual. Read 1 Cor 13:1-3 again! Remember, spirituality is not gauged by your gifts but by the fruit you bear ! In this area, then, the Corinthian church was certainly not to be followed as a model church !

3) THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH FALLS SHORT OF BEING A MODEL CHURCH BECAUSE OF THEIR LACK OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT!

This is what Paul is trying to get across to them in chapter 13 particularly. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ..." (Gal. 5:22-23). But these were in short supply in the Corinthian church. That is why they took each other to court, were contentious, divided, and exhibited selfishness and pride, etc. No, the Corinthian church was far from being a model church. It would have been preferable to take the Philippian church or the Thessalonian church as our model, but then, there was no indication in their epistles that they were tongues speakers!

REASON # 13

THE DANGER OF CLAIMING EXTRA-BIBLICAL REVELATION

While still in the Tongues Movement, I had to come to grips with the problem of divine revelation—was the Bible a completed, finished Book, or was God continuing to reveal new truths, even in our day? Does the Bible contain all that the man of God in the Church age needs for faith, and godly living, or do we need further revelations?

When a message was given in tongues and interpreted, or when a "prophet" would prophesy in the assembly, prefacing his remarks with "Thus saith the Lord" or "the Spirit speaketh expressly," was this indeed God speaking by inspiration? If so, then was this new revelation on a par with the written Scripture? And if so, could we add it to our Bibles? Was this "gift of prophecy" the same as that which Peter, Paul, James or John had?

When I began asking questions, the usual answer I received was, "No, we should not add these prophecies to our Bibles. They are simply reminders of truths already in the Bible, and must be in agreement with the Scriptures." All of which made me ask, "If there is no new truth revealed, why don't we go to the Scriptures themselves in the first place instead of this round- about method? Are we too lazy to read, study, and meditate? Must we get

our Bible truths in this fashion? Is the Bible not good enough? Do we need this added procedure?

Secondly, I'm afraid that many Christians, particularly the younger ones, got the wrong impression of this procedure and concluded that this was indeed new revelation—God speaking directly by inspiration. They would rely upon such messages for their guidance, which in some cases, led to spiritual shipwreck. If we use these means to guide us, we leave ourselves open to deception. The message can be colored or even fabricated by the messenger. Remember the repeated warnings in Scripture about false prophets (Matt. 24:11,24, etc.). Many have found this to be so to their sorrow. But this I know, that the written Scriptures are sure, trustworthy, reliable.

Remember Peter's statement in 2 Peter 1:19: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy [that is, the Scriptures]; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed." To the Scriptures! They are the means that God has ordained for Christian faith, guidance, growth, and maturity.

Notice also Paul's statement on this point in 2 Tim 3:16-17: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works." What is Paul saying here? What does the man of God need for guidance, for growth into maturity, for producing all good works? Not new revelations or these round- about procedures that can be deceiving counterfeits, but the written Scriptures that God gave to the Church through those whom He had ordained to lay the foundation of the Church (Eph. 2:20, 3:3-5). Let's read these verses: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone"; "How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote before in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."

Paul here lays claim to the gift of prophecy—by which God revealed "mysteries" (truths not revealed before) through him. But notice carefully verse 5: "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men [that is, church truth and doctrine], as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." "Now revealed." When? Not a continuing revelation throughout the entire Church age, as some try to teach, but the word "now" points specifically to Paul's day—the day of the apostles. God was pleased to give us Church truth, the New Testament, through the apostles and those closely associated with them. These writing apostles were New Testament prophets through whom the Holy Spirit spoke (2 Pet. 1:19-21). When the last apostle laid down his pen, the New Testament was complete and revelation ceased. All we needed for the entire Church age, "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16), was written and preserved for us in the blessed New Testament as it complements the Old Testament. The Scriptures are complete! The written Word is sufficient; there really is no further need for oral revelations!

Incidentally, that means that there is no longer any need for the real gift of prophecy in the church today. The canon of Scripture has been completed.

Why prophecies then? That is why, in 1 Cor. 13:8-10 Paul says: "Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail [or, "be done away"]; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect [or, "complete"] is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." Prophecy, a gift of revelation, was given by the Holy Spirit to give us the New Testament Scriptures, piece by piece, part by part, 27 books in all. But now that the canon of Scripture is "perfect," that is, "complete," this gift, as well as the other revelatory gifts here mentioned—tongues and the gift of knowledge, would "cease" or "vanish away." Why? Because their purpose in the Church was fulfilled and there was no further need or use for them. Why then, should we insist that we must have these gifts in operation in the Church today?

A brief further look at other Scriptures that indicate that New Testament church truth revelation is complete should be included here, though time and space does not allow the inclusion of all on this subject. But notice particularly Jude, verse 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once [or, "once for all"] delivered unto the saints." Please notice the words "the faith." He is speaking here of the body of truth that was then being given to the Church, that is, the New Testament. The phrase "the faith" is also found in Gal. 1:23 "He which persecuteth us in times past now preacheth THE FAITH." And so also in I Tim 4:1. I am told that the definite article "the" here in the Greek indicates the one and only faith.

There is no other!

NO MORE PROPHECIES NEEDED!

Notice too the word "once" or "once for all" as the marginal reading in my Bible has it. According to W.E. Vine, the Greek word here means, "once for all, of what is of perpetual validity, not requiring repetition." The same Greek word is also used in Heb. 9:28: "So Christ was ONCE offered to bear the sins of many," and also in 1 Peter 3:18: "For Christ also hath ONCE suffered for sins." Obviously, the word "once" used in these three verses means that it won't be repeated. It was a once-for-all act. Since that is so, the Scriptures as given to us through the instrumentality of the apostles are complete and final. There is no further revelation needed or forthcoming in God's plan for the Church.

One more word here in Jude 3 needs our attention. It is the word "delivered." "That ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once [for all] DELIVERED unto the saints." John F. MacArthur, Jr., in his book *The Charismatics*, points out that in the Greek this word "delivered" is an aorist passive participle, which indicates an act completed in the past with no continuing element (John F. MacArthur, *The Charismatics*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978, used by permission). So we must conclude that the Scriptures are God's final revelation to the church, and they are complete.

Some other Scriptures that indicate this also are Gal 1:6-9, Heb 1:2, 1 Cor 15:1-4, and Rev 22:18-19.

There is a dangerous trend in the Charismatic Movement in seeking after revelations and prophetic utterances and tongues and interpretations, apart from the written Scriptures. And extremes usually start with slight deviations. We must ask ourselves, "Where will this end?" Many cults have gone this route, such as the Mormons, Christian Science, the Children of God, the Moonies (followers of Sun Myung Moon), and also the Roman Catholic Church. Remember this: the great Protestant thesis is and always has been, that the Holy Spirit speaks through the Scriptures! Regarding new revelations someone has said: "If it's true it isn't new, and if it's new it isn't true"! Back to the Scriptures should be our watchword in these days of dangerous and growing deception! I close with this Scripture of warning, I Tim 4:1. Please consider it carefully: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."

REASON # 14

THE EXCESSES AND DECEPTIVE PRACTICES CONDONED IN DIVINE HEALING CAMPAIGNS

Needless to say, I grew up in a spiritual environment where divine healing was a prominent teaching and practice. Divine healing campaigns were very popular, attracting large crowds from far and near, often at great expense to the sick who needed special care and transportation. But also, for most of the sick they proved disappointing. Their expectations had been raised so high, only to be dashed after all the excitement was over. Some seemed to experience a momentary relief from pain, but all too many would discover no lasting benefit. And by that time the healer would be too far away to be questioned or to explain. The sick person would then simply be forced to accuse himself of lack of faith, or in some cases, throw his faith over- board. This type of procedure regarding the treatment of the sick is a very serious matter and ought to be questioned in the light of Scripture. Much reproach has come upon the cause of Christ by the actions of some unscrupulous people who claim to be prophets, miracle-workers, or to have the gifts of healing. These, Peter warns us, "through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you" (2 Pet. 2:1-3). How despicable! To masquerade as those who can help, but in reality, because of greed, they are out to exploit those who are least able to give them money.

Right here I want to make it very clear that I do believe in divine healing. I have seen the Lord heal the sick in answer to prayer, not in the spectacular environment of special healing campaigns, but in the simple biblical procedure, of James 5:14-16. Also, I don't want to be misunderstood as being opposed to praying for the sick, far from it, but I do believe that we need to take heed to the clear warnings of Scripture in regard to the false, the deceptive, that comes in the name of Christ but is not of Him—Matt 7:21-23. Before we examine Scripture on this topic, I want to tell you of a healing campaign that I participated in vitally, in which the Lord opened my eyes to the deceptive practices that

were employed. I went into that campaign a firm believer in the genuineness of the healer and his gift to heal. I did everything I could to help him. I was one hundred per cent for and behind him and encouraged sick friends to come long distances and be healed.

At that time, I believe it was in 1947, I was on the teaching staff of our denominational Bible school in Saskatoon, Sask. The healing meetings were held in the church auditorium which was adjacent to the Bible School dormitory and offices. It became my responsibility to place the very sick, such as stretcher-cases, in the various dormitory rooms. The "healer" in this particular campaign, was William Branham from the U.S.A., who had been invited by our church leaders to minister in some of our larger city churches. The services were very well attended by people coming long distances, many from other provinces.

When Mr. Branham had concluded his meeting in the church auditorium, I would take his arm and lead him from room to room in the dormitory, so that he could pray for those who were unable to attend the public meetings or stand in the healing-lines. This gave me an excellent opportunity to work in very close contact with him and observe what was happening. Let me repeat here, I was fully behind Mr. Branham at this time, and prayed earnestly with him for the healing of these dear suffering people. At that time, as he gave assurance to one after the other that they were healed, I rejoiced and praised the Lord with them.

A common practice of Mr. Branham was to take the hand of the sick person, and then say something like this, "The vibrations in your hand tell me that you have cancer. But I will pray for you that the Lord will heal you". When he had prayed, he would say something like this, "The vibrations are gone, the cancer is dead. You are healed! But you will be very sick for about three days till your body throws off the dead cancerous tissue. But don't worry, you are healed. Just trust the Lord." With similar words he would give assurances to these suffering ones that they would recover. This, of course, would bring hope and joy to these dear souls, many of whom responded with a large financial gift, sometimes far beyond their means. At times I was given large sums of money to pass on to Mr. Branham, which I always did gladly, for I too believed him.

This will have to be just a very brief picture of what went on day after day throughout the whole campaign, but you can visualize the rejoicing that was created by this man's declarations of healings, and the hope that was given to scores of people who were desperate in their pain and suffering. I wish that I could go on to say that all these, or at least a good number of them, did go on to recover. But I can't. Time went on, the campaign ended, and Mr. Branham and his party were gone. Then we began to see the results being tested by time. It was a difficult time for us, and particularly for me. For one by one these that I had personally seen "healed" and declared so by the "healer," died. Our faith was severely tested. Relatives of the deceased ones would ask, "Why?" What could we tell them?

I had to ask myself several questions: If these people were really healed, why did they die? Did their faith fail? Why then did so many fail in their faith and lose their healing?

How did this line up with healings recorded in Scripture? Did people healed by Christ and the apostles lose their healing? Were they subject to relapse too if their faith failed? Or, could it be that these Branham healings were counterfeit and not genuine after all, much as we had believed him to be genuine? And, worst of all, was it possible that we had been victims of deception?

All these questions were answered gradually in the days and weeks that followed the campaign. Time and space does not permit me here to elaborate or go into the various incidents involved, but I will simply refer to a few of the key ones.

In the first weeks following the campaign we received one report after another of people whose healing had not lasted. Either they were back to their original condition or had died. It was disturbing! Some meddlesome newspapermen had investigated. Their reports hurt the reputation of our churches and witness as more and more people who were supposed to be healed were found not to be after all.

One day while I was occupied in the office at the Bible School, I received a visitor. As he came in, I immediately recognized him as the father of four of our Bible School students. His was a highly respected family in our Fellowship. But not many days before this, during the campaign, he had flown his wife, sick with cancer, to Saskatoon. He had phoned me from the airport asking where the ambulance should bring his wife to be prayed for.

I made the arrangements and placed her in one of the dormitory rooms. That evening when Mr. Branham had concluded his ministry in the church auditorium, I led him into her room where he prayed for her and pronounced her healed. Needless to say, we all rejoiced together! Joyfully they returned by ambulance and plane to their home near Regina.

Now, several days later, this dear brother sat before me in our office, his heart heavy and his mind in turmoil. He had come nearly 200 miles to speak to me. Before he did, however, I already sensed what had probably happened.

But in spite of this, his question still hit me very hard. "Brother Pohl," he said, "you were there beside my wife's bed the night Mr. Branham prayed for her and pronounced her healed?" "Yes," I replied, "I was right there." He went on, "Can you tell me why it is that my wife who was healed just a few days ago is now in the grave?" My friends, I believe that was one of the hardest questions that I was ever called upon to answer! My heart went out to this dear brother. I felt with him. But how could I answer him?

Should I tell him that his and his family's faith had failed? Yet his was a family that was highly regarded in our denomination for spirituality. Or, on the other hand, should I tell him that perhaps Mr. Branham did not have the gifts of healing after all and that we were all deceived? To admit this would reflect seriously upon the wisdom and integrity of our denominational leaders who had brought Mr. Branham to Canada to minister in our churches.

Actually I can't remember just what I told our dear brother. But I do know that I did some very serious thinking about all this. I began to seriously question this whole area of our teaching and practice relative to this approach to divine healing. I am not so sure, however, that too many others did the same.

But someone might say that his case was an exception? But was it? There were, then, far too many "exceptions"! Let me cite another case:

One afternoon during the healing campaign I answered a telephone call. The call was from a Pentecostal pastor from Ontario. He had just flown in with his wife, sick with cancer, and her nurse. As on other occasions, I admitted them to a dormitory room, and in due course she was prayed for and Mr. Branham pronounced her healed. Again there was much rejoicing. I remember that the pastor handed me a cheque of a sizable sum of money to pass on to Mr. Branham. As he did so, he remarked that he couldn't afford to give that much, but that Mr. Branham deserved it because his wife was now healed, and he had spent thousands of dollars on doctors that didn't help her.

It was several weeks later that I, as the Missionary-Secretary of our denomination, visited and ministered in our churches in Ontario. When in the vicinity of this pastor's home city, I made inquiry as to his wife's state of health, only to be told that she too had passed away. What a blow that must have been to that dear brother? But that was not all. I was told that he had a good radio ministry in his city. When he had returned from the healing meetings in Saskatoon, he announced over his radio broadcast that his wife had been wonderfully healed. However, just a short while after that he had to inform his radio audience that his wife had died. I was told that it dealt a severe blow to his radio ministry.

My friends, what kind of a testimony is this to the world? To them it "does not add up." And there is something wrong! Did this pastor's faith fail?

Let me ask, did this sort of thing happen to those who were healed by the Lord Jesus or by His apostles? Where, then, is it recorded? As Christians we sometimes think that we're "charitable" if we overlook these things, but is this real "charity" or love? Is it loving to permit this type of thing to be carried on in our churches, to the needless suffering, agony, disappointment, and expense of the sick? And more importantly, is it scriptural not to deal with the false, the counterfeit? (see Titus 1:7-14).

Are we church leaders called upon to "protect" the sheep ...or the wolves?

It was this failing in our denomination, and in the Tongues Movement in general, to deal with ministers of high standing or popularity who needed to be corrected or stopped, that became one of the greater reasons for my leaving the Movement. I came to the conclusion that excitement, the spectacular, was not the most important, if the genuine God-glorifying working of the Holy Spirit was not present in healing meetings.

Now, though much more could be said, I must conclude this section with this summary: I believe that the Lord does heal today. His method for us is stated in James 5:14-15, where

the sick person is to call for the elders of the church. Today this is reversed, the "healers" call for the sick! Large offerings are usually taken, much of which, if not all, goes to the healer.

Again I am reminded of Peter's warning in 2 Peter 2:3, where we read: "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you ..." And tragically, because of this, the "way of truth is evil spoken of." It brings reproach upon the Gospel of Christ.

Secondly, we should examine the results of modern healing campaigns and compare them with those of Christ and His apostles. What percentage of sick prayed for are really healed? Generally, according to what I have observed, the average is very low. Yes, there are some. There undoubtedly are some psychological healings, and then there are a few whose faith reaches out to Christ Himself. They, I believe, are healed in spite of the healer. But these are few in number. Don't be deceived by the number that you think you saw healed in the campaign. All that can be very deceiving. Caught up in the excitement and spirit of the meeting, you can easily be misled. I was privileged to be on the "inside" of this particular campaign, and had my eyes opened to some of the inner workings. I could, if time permitted, relate several instances where people in the audience thought that they saw a miracle when it was not so at all.

But more importantly, the low percentage of those healed today compares very unfavourably with the biblical record. Of Christ Himself we read in Matt 8:16: "When the even was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick." Of the apostles we read, Acts 5:16: "There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one." No need to ask in those days, "Were there any who were healed?" No! For they were all healed! That was the real gift of healing.

It was genuine. Let those who profess to have the gifts of healing today produce this kind of evidence! But, sad to say, they fall very far short.

Besides, some of the modern healers seem to "specialize" in healing certain kinds of sicknesses. They shy away from the more difficult cases such as severely crippled people. But the healings performed by Christ and His apostles were not limited to certain diseases. Of the Lord Jesus we read that He healed "every sickness and every disease among the people" (Matt. 9:35). And as we read in Acts 5:16, the apostles "healed every one," obviously every sickness and disease was dealt with by them.

Finally, we must also remember that the miraculous sign-gifts were given to the apostles, and to those whom they authorized, to be their apostolic credentials as they were called upon to complete the laying of the foundation of the church that Christ had begun (Eph. 2:20). This is what Paul is referring to in 2 Cor. 12:12 as he defends his apostleship before the Corinthian church. We read: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." My question here is

this: If anyone apart from the apostles or those authorized by them could perform these amazing genuine healings and miracles, then where or what were the signs of an apostle? We must conclude, then, that these special gifts of healing and miracles were given to the apostles as their credentials while they finished laying the foundation of the Church, and when their work was done, and they passed off the earthly scene, these sign-gifts would no longer be operative.

The great display of the miraculous that accompanied Christ and the apostles in the church's beginnings ended with the passing of the apostles.

For us to try to duplicate these today can only lead to confusion and the opening of a door that makes room for deception and disappointment. I believe recent history simply proves that point.

Church history also shows us that with the passing of the apostles the great display of miraculous gifts ceased. Even near the end of Paul's ministry apparently he did not use his gifts of healing for he wrote to Timothy, 2 Tim 4:20: "But Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." Now if the modern teaching that God wants all His people to be well and healthy all the time were true, why did not Paul exercise his gifts of healing and heal Trophimus? Surely, he could have used Trophimus's help in the ministry? But it appears that even then already the gift of healing was passing away.

That does not mean that God cannot or does not heal today, even though He has withdrawn the gift. He is still sovereign, and does answer prayer, if we come to Him according to James 5:14-15. Thank God many are healed, not through the gift but by "the prayer of faith." But we should not expect the same spectacular display of healings and miracles that accompanied the ministries of Christ and the apostles, for these belonged to them as their credentials and to the church's beginnings. Now we "walk by faith, not by sight." (2 Cor. 5:7).

REASON # 15

THE TENDENCY TO BLIND, UNQUESTIONING DEVOTION TO POPULAR LEADERS

There is a dangerous tendency in the Movement to idolize and give undue reverence to leaders with abilities and strong personalities, or we might say, "charisma." Even when there are glaring errors, inconsistencies, and unscriptural practices, many will support, defend, and blindly follow these leaders. In a previous section I referred to a "prophet-evangelist" who visited one of our churches. I remember the unquestioned respect, reverence, and awe that people showed, especially when he "prophesied" (so-called). It reminds me of the Samaritans in Acts 8:9-11, who also gave undue reverence to Simon the sorcerer. We read these words in verse 10: "To whom [that is, Simon] they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God." I believe many today are similarly deceived by false prophets and miracle-workers (so-called), in spite of the oft-repeated scriptural warnings against deception. The prophet evangelist I

mentioned above turned out to be a false prophet, yet he was given great honour and respect by practically the whole church.

It is amazing how these clever personalities can capture the minds and hearts of unsuspecting sincere Christians and blind them to their own errors and faults! I remember hearing, when still a young boy, the glowing reports about Aimee Semple McPherson. She was the originator of one of the tongues denominations, and was acclaimed as a great leader. Many of us would have considered it a great privilege to see her and hear her speak.

But though great crowds followed her and idolized her, the "behind-the-scenes" picture is not pleasant. An examination of her record is as disappointing as it is revealing. But I am sure that many of her devoted followers will not believe anything that might be proven against her. They can't and won't believe that their revered leader could be guilty of doing any wrong.

Another popular faith-healer, Mr. A.A. Allen, whom I heard on the radio years ago, and who must have had a considerable following of supporters, was found dead in his hotel room in San Francisco in 1970. He apparently had come to the city for an operation on his arthritic knee, but died in his hotel room. The coroner reported that he had died of acute alcoholism and fatty infiltration of the liver. But I dare say that many of his loyal followers will not believe the coroner's report. They just can't believe that their leader could do such a thing.

It is this "blind loyalty" that is all too prevalent in many areas of the Movement that is alarming. In the area of financial support, many sincere people of God, overcome by the "charisma" or personality of some leader, give very generously to line the coffers of these people, without investigating or questioning what use is made of their offerings and gifts.

Just to illustrate, I refer to a news item that appeared in the *Calgary Herald*, June 7, 1980. The article made reference to evangelist Rex Humbard's pleas for financial support for his television programs, and then told of how he spends some of that money. Here is a quote in part:

"Evangelist Rex Humbard, who last year said his television ministry was strapped for funds and appealed to viewers for more cash, admits he and his sons recently purchased a home and condominiums in Florida for \$650,000.

"My people don't give a hoot what I spend that money for,' Humbard said.

"Humbard said last September 24, his ministry was \$3.2 million in debt but purchased a home and condominiums near Palm Beach, Fla. with his sons for the \$650,000 sum, the Cleveland Press reported this week" (*Calgary Herald*,

June 7, 1980, used by permission of United Press International, 366 Adelaide St. East, Toronto, Ontario).

When Mr. Humbard said: "My people don't give a hoot what I spend that money for," he certainly uncovered an obvious trend and reality among many Charismatic people today, and he underscores what I am trying to point out.

Far too many Christians today are "too-trusting." Dare we handle the Lord's money in this careless manner, either in the giving or the receiving of it?

No wonder, then, that many God-fearing pastors and missionaries serving the Lord in small churches or in difficult areas, are suffering for lack of sufficient support—because God's money is being "drained off" by appealing personalities. Also think of what the non-Christian thinks of all this. Is it a good testimony? By no means! The very fact that this newspaper reporter investigated and the Calgary Herald published this article tells us something.

This tendency, then, to blind devotion and faithfulness to leaders with strong personalities, I believe, is very dangerous. We see much of the same in some of the better known cults today. All we need to do to emphasize this point is to mention the name of Jim Jones. In 1978 the world was shocked by the mass suicide of hundreds of Jones' loyal followers. Why did they do it? Because long before that fatal day they began to give blind, unswerving loyalty to Jones. They began to trust him, for everything and with everything, even when he did wrong. They ceased to think for themselves. They were deceived. They certainly did not follow God's Word closely in its teachings or they could not have followed Jones too long. It is so important, Christian, that we stay very close to the Bible. Study it!

Believe it! Trust it! Follow it!

Someone might object here and say that I am too hard on the Tongues- Charismatic people in this area. May I then add this thought: it is also true that among non-Tongues Christians we can find leaders with strong personalities who take advantage of trusting Christians. But there is this difference—if the Tongues people are correct in their claim that they "have more" and are "filled with the Spirit" because they speak with tongues and are therefore "more spiritual" than the non-Tongues people, then they should have a better record in this area! If they indeed have more than we have, then it should be evident! It is one thing to make a claim, it is quite another to produce the evidence.

May we all, by the grace of God, strive to be more Bible-oriented, and to be more loyal to our Lord Jesus Christ and the Scriptures than to personalities!

REASON 16

THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT WILL BE INSTRUMENTAL IN PRODUCING THE PROPHESED WORLD ECUMENICAL CHURCH OF THE LAST DAYS

Strictly speaking, this was not a reason why I left the Tongues Movement, but it is a reason why I am not, and would not, be in the Movement today. I see signs of great danger ahead. Some other Christians share the same concern with me. I wish that I were wrong, but all signs at the present indicate that the Charismatic Movement could be the common denominator for a worldwide ecumenical organization or church. In the past, all attempts to bring about ecumenicity on the basis of faith, belief, or doctrine, have failed. But in the Charismatic Movement, unity is attained, not by unanimity of doctrine but on the basis of a common religious experience. To them largely, doctrine is not the important thing. But the experience is.

So it is not surprising that in Charismatic circles people of many denominational backgrounds and doctrines can all worship and fellowship together, not because they agree on doctrine but because they agree on a common religious experience.

This is a very dangerous trend! Why? Because setting truth aside in order to have unity will ultimately put the One Who is "the Truth," the Lord Jesus, outside the Movement. That's just what we see predicted in Rev. 3:20. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Here is a picture of the condition of the Church in the last days. We see the Lord Jesus standing "outside" the Church, knocking, trying to get in. But there is no room for Him. Doctrine and truth have been neglected. Experience has become the important thing, and the criteria for church membership or fellowship. No longer is it faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ that makes one an accepted Christian. He who is "the truth" is no longer wanted or welcome in church but is left standing outside ... what a sad, tragic picture!

Can it be, then, that the Charismatic Movement will be the instrument that will help to bring about the great world church of Revelation, chapter 17?

It is possible if they continue, in the interests of unity, to put experience ahead of doctrine. Anything can happen to the church that moves away from the solid foundations of the truths of God's Word.

Dr. Vernon McGee, in a radio broadcast not long ago, referred to a statement by a Charismatic who said that in these last days God was laying His Word aside in order to bring the churches together! It is a sad, sad day, when Truth must be sacrificed to obtain unity! But that is what we see developing today.

Perhaps the warning voiced by a dear uncle of mine shortly before he went to be with the Lord, is right. He was an ardent Pentecostal Christian, and in my last visit with him he greatly surprised me with this question.

Calling me by my first name, he said, "Do you know that the new Charismatic Movement is leading our Pentecostal people right into the church of the Antichrist?" Nothing that he could have said could have surprised me more.

But, from that point on we found ourselves in agreement as we had a lovely and profitable discussion together. It happened to be the last visit I had with him, for shortly after that he went to be with the Lord.

He was an old-time Pentecostal, or one of those who are sometimes referred to as "classical Pentecostals." I'm discovering that some of these classical Pentecostals are also becoming concerned or alarmed by what is happening in this "new" Charismatic Movement. This is evidenced by a statement made by a Pentecostal writer, Mr. Harry Lunn, in an article entitled, "Beware the Christless Pentecost." He said: "A Pentecost without repentance, a Pentecost without Christ, that is what some are experiencing today" (*End Times Messenger*, publication of the Apostolic Church of Pentecost of Canada, Saskatoon, Sask., March 1972). I was glad to see this thoughtful and challenging article. It tells me that some of the classical Pentecostals are also beginning to see the warning signals in the "new" Charismatic Movement.

Another classical Pentecostal, an elderly aunt of mine, also expressed her misgivings by asking me this question: "How is it that Charismatic Catholic people can speak in tongues, and then go back to the Catholic church and worship Mary, pray to the saints, go to Mass, etc? How can they do this?"

There is something wrong, isn't there?" I had to agree with her. Something is wrong! It doesn't stand up in the light of the Scriptures. And to Auntie it was a special problem because she herself is a converted Catholic. Years ago when she was saved, she knew that she could not go back to the Catholic church to fellowship and worship there. It would be to compromise truth. So now she can't understand these "new" Charismatics.

These are days, then, that we need to live very close to the Scriptures.

There is a dearth of good, sound Bible study amongst God's people. Only with the Truth will we be able to combat the Lie.

REASON # 17

THEIR DISTORTION OF THE TRUE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

The Scriptures definitely teach that there is a spirit-filling for every believer. God has a plan whereby every child of His can live a new life, a life of victory, fruitfulness, and effective service for him—a life that will be Christlike and glorify God. God's basic provision to make this possible is the filling of the Holy Spirit, for we cannot live holy and God-pleasing lives in our own strength.

Have you ever asked yourself, Why did the Lord sent the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to indwell me? What was His purpose in doing this? As we study chapters 14 through 16 of John's Gospel we will see a number of reasons, but they all add up to one basic purpose—that we, sinners, saved by grace, may now live lives to God's glory, trophies of His grace, and that we too might be like our Saviour and Lord living Christlike lives.

The Lord knew that in our own strength this would be impossible, so He arranged that the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, should indwell every believer—not only to be "with" him, but "in" him, John 14:17. (He couldn't be nearer to us, could He?) And further, He "abides with us forever"! (Jn. 14:16). Why this arrangement? That He, the Holy Spirit indwelling might, as we daily yield ourselves, our bodies, to Him, live the life of Christ through us—that we might "live" in the Spirit and "walk" in the Spirit.

All that we need to live victorious, God-pleasing lives is ours already potentially in the indwelling Holy Spirit!

But now someone will ask, "Where does the filling of the Holy Spirit come in, and what is meant by 'being filled with the Holy Spirit'?" Our answer to these questions, I believe, will determine whether we hold to the Tongues-Charismatic viewpoint or to that of the non-Tongues Christians. The Tongues-Charismatic people generally have the concept that the filling of the Holy Spirit is a crisis experience, a once-in-a-lifetime experience evidenced by the speaking in tongues. When tongues speaking occurs, it signals that the seeker "has got it." Now some do believe that there can be renewed fillings thereafter, but their whole approach to the filling leaves the impression that "now I have it," and that's it!

As a young Christian in the Movement, I got that impression when I repeatedly heard testimonies like this: "I thank the Lord that I was filled with the Holy Spirit 40, 30, 10, or whatever years ago, with the evidence of speaking with other tongues." It left me with the thought that this filling of the Holy Spirit was something like a once-in-a-lifetime inoculation. From this experience on they are perpetually "filled." And yet, in some cases, I wondered about the effectiveness of this experience when I observed some of the conduct of those who had testified. I had to ask, "If they still are filled with the Spirit, how can they do those things that are wrong?" Something didn't quite add up.

On the other hand, the non-Tongues, non-Charismatic belief generally held is that the filling of the Holy Spirit is not a once-for-all experience but involves a continual yieldedness to the indwelling Holy Spirit, so that He can bring our lives daily into submission to the Lordship of Christ, thus producing the fruit of righteousness in us. In short, it is a life, rather than a crisis-experience.

One other teaching of Tongues-Charismatic people that contributes to confusion at this point is that the filling and the baptism are one and the same experience. If they were the same, then the teaching that the filling is a once-in-a-lifetime experience should be correct, for the baptism is a once-for-all event. But we never read in Scripture of anyone experiencing a second Spirit baptism. But, we do read, several times, of Christians

experiencing a fresh filling. Nowhere in Scripture do we have a command to believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, but we do have such a command regarding the filling, in Eph. 5:18.

The baptism and the filling are two different ministries of the Holy Spirit. By the baptism all believers are placed into the Body of Christ, the Church, 1 Cor. 12:13. There we read, "For by one Spirit are [or were] we all baptized into one body..." It is a once-for-all act of Christ by the Spirit that unites the believer to His Body, the Church. The word "are" here could be translated "were," which informs us that all Christians have experienced the baptism when they believed on Christ. It is not an experience to be sought again. That is why there is no command anywhere in Scripture for Christian believers to seek the baptism.

By Spirit baptism we are placed into Christ. Did you ever notice how often the phrase, "in Christ" appears in the New Testament? What does it mean?

How did we get into that position? By the baptism of the Holy Spirit. At the moment of believing on Jesus Christ we are placed into Christ by Spirit baptism.

But now let us look at the filling. Turn to Ephesians 5:18, where we read:

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."

Briefly notice several things that this Scripture tells us:

- 1) This is a command. God expects every Christian to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Are you? It is just as sinful for you not to be filled as it is for you to be "drunk."
- 2) The filling is not optional. It is not a case of, "If I want to I will!" No! God expects all Christians to be filled, that is His plan for all of us.
- 3) This command is addressed to those who already are Christians, Eph 1:1, and who have already been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ, who are "in Christ."
- 4) Be filled. A close look at these two words can be very helpful. The Greek here gives the thought of "being constantly under the control of" the Holy Spirit.

Years ago I looked at the filling as a once-for-all experience. One day I heard brother Theodore Epp of Back to the Bible Broadcast speak on Eph. 5:18. He pointed out the above meaning of "be filled" in the Greek. That really caught my attention and helped me immensely. It tied many Scriptures and truths together for me. For if a Christian is Spirit-filled, he is indeed Spirit-controlled. It cannot be otherwise. And if he is Spirit-controlled

he is, then, under the lordship of Christ, which is where he should be. And being under the control of the Spirit he will also "walk in the Spirit" and "live in the Spirit". The Spirit-filled person, then, is the Spirit-controlled person. The Holy Spirit is not a power that you can have and use, but He is a Person, Who desires to have and use you!

5) This brings us to another thought—if He is in control, then it isn't a case of me having "more of Him" (the concept so many have today as they seek the filling), but it is a case of Him having "more of me," yes, ALL of me! (Rom. 6:13,19; 12:1-2). You cannot have more of Him, but He can, and should, have more of you.

6) Every Christian has the Holy Spirit in his life as Resident, but the Spirit-filled (controlled) Christian has Him in his life as PRESIDENT!

In summary I would like to repeat that I believe that our doctrinal views of the Holy Spirit can either thwart or fulfill God's wonderful plan and purpose that every Christian live a victorious, fruitful, and Christ-honouring life. There is no better testimony to a lost world than a Spirit-controlled LIFE with the fruit of the Spirit in manifestation (Gal. 5:22-23). The world doesn't care how often or how loudly we shout: "Look at me, I'm filled with the Spirit because I spoke with tongues, etc.," but they do notice and care if they see a transformed LIFE, a life daily under the control of the Holy Spirit, a life that exhibits: "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." They are witnessed to when they see Christ living in us! That is God's design for our lives; let us not disappoint Him!

CHARISMATICS—WHITHER BOUND?

POSTSCRIPT TO SECOND PRINTING

In chapter 16 of this book I refer to the possibility that the modern Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement could be leading its followers into a world ecumenical church. Since that manuscript was written for the first printing much has happened. There is increasing evidence that there is a strong movement toward unity and ecumenicity among both Protestant and Catholic Charismatics. We must ask the question, In the light of current trends, is the Charismatic-Pentecostal Movement leading its people back to Roman Catholicism?

Let's take a quick look at this Movement now under these three headings:

ITS GROWTH, ITS DANGERS, ITS DIRECTION.

THE GROWTH OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Some Christians recently said to me, "But the Charismatic Movement is dying out!" How misinformed they were! Make no mistake, the Charismatic Movement is not dying out; it is growing! It is not a Movement that we can ignore, hoping that it will go away (the

attitude that many have today). It is a religious force that we will have to reckon with. We will have to take a stand either for or against it because great spiritual issues and principles are involved. We must ask ourselves, Is it firmly based and rooted in Scripture? Is it built upon Truth or upon religious experiences?

Many Charismatic conferences have and are being held. Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, Episcopalians, Mennonites, Presbyterians, United Church members, etc., as well as non-denominational Christians, come together on the basis of the charismatic experience. Not only are there local and national conferences, but also international. The first international Conference of the Charismatic Renewal took place in Kansas City in 1977. It was reported that some 50,000 Charismatics attended. At the "Washington for Jesus Rally" (1980), it is said that 300,000 Pentecostal, Catholic, and non-Catholic Charismatics gathered. Included were leaders from Roman Catholic and a number of Protestant denominations and churches and some well-known Charismatic radio and television personalities. In 1981, "Jesus 81 Rallies" were programmed throughout the world, including Berlin, Germany, and New Jersey, New York.

No, the Charismatic Movement is not dying out. It is growing tremendously! We cannot, must not, ignore it. Many Christians are being caught up in it. They need teaching and direction. Are we providing it?

THE DANGERS OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

FALSE UNITY

A paramount objective of Charismatics appears to be the unity of churches and denominations. Statements made by both Catholic and non-Catholic Charismatics lead to this conclusion. And Pope John Paul II is certainly in agreement. Unity of all churches (under Rome, of course) is one of his main objectives, it appears. Addressing a conference of Charismatic leaders in Rome, he reportedly said, "By your experience of many gifts of the Holy Spirit which are shared also with our separated brothers and sisters, yours is the special joy of growing in a desire for the unity to which the Spirit guides us and in a commitment to the serious task of ecumenism."

But to attain to that unity, Bible doctrine will obviously have to be set aside or else compromised. What kind of unity will result? Not a unity of faith, a unity based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but one that is based on experience—mainly the "tongues speaking" experience.

Charismatics of various beliefs meet and fellowship together, accepting each other as Christians and "loving" each other without giving serious consideration to the unscriptural and soul-destroying doctrines that some adhere to. Are Roman Catholic Charismatics questioned as to whether they have put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (not Mary or the church) as their Savior from sin? Is anything said about the worship of Mary instead of the Creator or the Savior (Rom. 1:25)? Why is it that some Roman Catholic Charismatics say that they are more devoted to Mary because of their

Charismatic experience? The Scriptures plainly teach that Christian fellowship and love must be based on Truth, not on false doctrines. We should love in the truth (2 Jn. 1; 3 Jn. 1,3-4).

It appears that this "unity" that is being promoted today is a false unity.

It is an endeavor to bring together the saved and the unsaved, the truly born-again believers in Christ and those who merely have a religious profession. According to the Scriptures, this is a false unity. Man says, "Join them." God says, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Cor. 6:17). When will we believe and obey?

FALSE REVIVAL

Charismatic activities and growth are considered to be the beginnings of a great worldwide revival. It would indeed be wonderful to see a genuine revival stir God's people everywhere, but is what we see in the modern Charismatic movement a genuine revival from God? The emphasis does not appear to be on the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection as being necessary to save man from his sin, resulting in a "new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17). Following that, there is a transformed lifestyle, such as was exhibited by the Christians at Thessalonica of whom Paul could write, "Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1:9-10). Rather they appear to put their emphasis upon a "second blessing" teaching, sometimes without a "first blessing" (salvation) experience.

It is primarily a Holy Spirit-centered movement. But the Lord Jesus told us that "when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, Who proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me" (Jn. 15:26), and, "He shall glorify Me" (Jn. 16:14). The Holy Spirit never exalts Himself, but Christ!

Genuine revival is always Christ-centered.

Consider this, too, that the Scriptures warn us that there will be a great "falling away," and apostasy, as we draw near to the Lord's coming (2 Thess. 2:3), and not a worldwide revival. And the Lord Himself said, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Lk. 18:8).

That does not rule out a genuine revival amongst those of God's people who will stand true to the Scriptures, though greatly outnumbered and persecuted. Church history records that persecution and trials have been spiritually beneficial to those who have remained loyal to Christ and His Gospel and the Holy Scriptures. But that is not to be confused with a great world-wide religious movement toward the unity of many denominations and organizations of varied beliefs and doctrines. That is neither Biblical unity or Biblical revival.

A FALSE CHURCH

False unity and false revival will lead to a false church. This we are warned about in Scripture. The final state of Christendom will be the Laodicean condition—an organization bearing Christ's name but with Christ Himself on the outside—an apostate church (Rev. 3:14-22), not a "revived" or spiritual church. In chapters 17 and 18 of Revelation the Lord refers to this false church, this spiritual "harlot," and pronounces her doom.

A FALSE APPRAISAL OF CHURCH HISTORY

This evident desire for union with the Roman Catholic Church, in spite of her unchanged basic doctrines, indicates a woeful lack of understanding of the Protestant Reformation. David Samuel, in his book *Pope or Gospel*, wrote,

"Those who forget their history end up as slaves in the gutter.' Those words, spoken recently by a politician, remained in my mind because they pin-pointed a real weakness of Protestantism today. One of the principal reasons for the drift in the Protestant churches towards Rome is the neglect of history. We shall not understand ourselves, and we shall certainly not understand the Church of Rome, unless we take the trouble to acquaint ourselves with what has happened in the past."

Were Martin Luther and the Reformers wrong? Was the Reformation all a great mistake? Was the blood of the martyrs spilled in vain? Do we now tell evangelical, born-again Christians who came out of the Roman system that they should go back, that all that they experienced was really not necessary—it was all a big mistake? They know better, but do we who still call ourselves Protestants? Make no mistake, the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement is not Protestant now.

THE DIRECTION OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Just a few days ago an elderly Christian lady who spends much of her time watching and listening to Charismatic programs on radio and TV said excitedly, "The Catholics are coming!" She meant that Catholics are being converted and saved. But perhaps it is not so much a case of the Catholics coming to our Savior by faith in His finished sacrificial work, but more a case of Protestants going—going back to Rome!

It is now claimed (1983) that there are some 35 million Roman Catholic Charismatics. They have become the predominant force in the Charismatic Movement. The pope has cleverly kept the Catholic Charismatics within his church. He has appointed certain bishops to shepherd them within the church. Continually the Catholic Charismatics are urged to stay in their church. The pope is using this movement to bring the non-Catholic Charismatics into his "fold." And he is apparently succeeding!

Addressing some 10,000 delegates to the third International Conference on the Charismatic Renewal in Rome, the pope said, "The church and the world need what you have—your new joy and enthusiasm. Now go and give it to them."

Dr. Ronald E. Baxter, in his book *Charismatic Gift of Tongues*, asks the following question,

"Who is receiving whom in this enlarged Charismatic ecumenism? Most astute observers would agree that the present situation is a little like the old adage, 'Come into my parlor, said the spider to the fly.' To the Roman Catholic hierarchy, the Protestant Charismatics are but separated brethren who need to return to Mother Church. To many leaders in the Charismatic Movement, this might not be a bad idea!"

For some time now Pentecostal-Charismatic leaders have been trying to bring about such a union. A news item from Vienna, Austria, November 9, 1981, as reported in the *Western Catholic Reporter*, Edmonton, Alberta, stated that, "A high-level ecumenical dialogue with representatives of Pentecostal churches had produced surprisingly large areas of agreement, according to one participant. Father Robert Wister, professor of church history at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Darlington, New Jersey, one of the Catholic participants at the meeting, said the discussion ended 'with deeper consensus than had been anticipated.' An agreed statement issued at the conclusion of the week-long meeting said, 'Roman Catholics discovered that Mary enters into Pentecostal preaching and devotion. The Pentecostals see that the presentation of Mary's intercession in official Roman Catholic teaching does not undermine the one mediatorship of Jesus taught by the Bible'."

There appears to be a compromising of doctrine here to obtain unity. 1 Timothy 2:5 reads, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

A leading instrument in the Pentecostal-Charismatic-Roman Catholic unity movement is the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship. This is not, strictly speaking, an interdenominational fellowship of Christians but is very much a Charismatic organization that requires its officers to be tongues speakers or seekers. This Fellowship is working for unity with Roman Catholics.

The Scriptures plainly warn us of great deception in the last days of the Church: "But evil men and seducers shall become worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou ... in the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:14-15).

We are facing difficult days! Intense spiritual battles are before us.

Grave decisions will have to be made. God's people will be called upon to take a definite stand for Truth and the Scriptures, no doubt at great cost.

We must, though, remember that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand!" (Eph. 6:12,13). Will you and I be found faithful to our Lord Jesus and His Gospel?

I close with the following timely warning written by Mr. Wilson Ewin in his booklet entitled *The Spirit of Pentecostal-Charismatic Unity*:

"A powerful spirit is moving throughout the labyrinth of Pentecostal-Charismatic renewal. The spirit is the same deceptive voice that spoke in the garden and said, 'in the day that ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods ...' (Gen. 3:5). It is the enemy of our Holy God, a rebellious spirit from darkness. The apostle warned of this coming of 'ANOTHER SPIRIT' (2 Cor. 11:3-4). And now the voice of that spirit is heard calling for unity and the formation of the end time universal religious complex of John's Revelation.

"But wait! Another voice is calling. However, the appeal is different. In fact, it is strongly opposed to the spirit of unity. The Spirit of God says, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues' (Rev. 18:4). The reader is left to decide which of the two voices he will obey.

"Upon that decision rests the future of America. Our wicked society is facing the imminent judgment of a Holy God and separation from evil is God's ultimatum for deliverance. It always was. (See 2 Chron. 7:14). It was so with Israel of old when the nation united with evil. And so it is today in a modern parallel. The Spirit of Pentecostal-Charismatic unity is leading untold millions back into the ruin of Romanist falsehood, error, and idolatrous worship. It is the system that God hates and has promised to destroy (Rev. 18:6-24). 'Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you' (2 Cor. 6:17)."

CHARISMATICS MOVING EVER FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH

POSTSCRIPT TO THIRD PRINTING

Over six years have elapsed since the Second Printing of this book. Has the Charismatic Movement weakened during that time? Has it renounced its errors and false practices and conformed more closely to the Scriptures?

I wish that I could answer in the affirmative, but I can't. Contrary to what many non-charismatic Christians might think today, the Charismatic Movement is continuing to grow tremendously! And, there is an escalating trend toward false and heretical teaching and unscriptural practices. And beyond this is its bent for ecumenicity—fellowship and unity with other denominations and groups which deny the true Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and which are not "sound in the faith."

CHARISMATIC GROWTH

David W. Cloud, editor of O TIMOTHY magazine, in Vol. 7, Issues 8-9, 1990, wrote informatively as follows:

"At the turn of this century there were no pentecostals in the world. Zero. Even 50 years ago pentecostalism was a very minor part of Christendom. But things are different now! The ten largest churches in the world are charismatic. The only church in the world which claims over 500,000 members is charismatic. The charismatic movement is probably the fastest growing movement which names the name of Christ. The charismatic movement dominates the Christian media in the West, permeates such influential organizations as the Christian Booksellers of America and the Christian Broadcasting Association, and controls much of the Christian television and radio transmission. Some of the largest mission groups are charismatic. Youth With a Mission, with its 21,000 workers (counting short-termers), is an example. The charismatic movement influences society at every strata, from the businessmen to the poorest of the poor in third world nations.

"Statistician David Howard claims that 372 million Christians—one in every five—identifies with the pentecostal-charismatic movement (Press Release, Indianapolis '90, August 16, 1990). He claims that charismatics are growing by 54,000 per day, and that 80% of all conversions are charismatic. These statistics are highly debatable, but there can be no doubt that it is a massive movement" (David Cloud, "Charismatic Confusion in Indianapolis," O TIMOTHY magazine, Way of Life Literature, 1701 Harns Road, Oak Harbor, WA 98277, Vol. 7, Issues 8-9, 1990), pp. 1,2).

Consider also the popularity of large Charismatic conferences. Two of these, sponsored by the North American Renewal Service Committee, were: New Orleans, 1987, and Indianapolis, 1990. The New Orleans Conference attracted about 40,000 and at Indianapolis there were about 25,000 registrants. David W. Cloud gives the following statistics on Indianapolis: "Forty-eight percent of those in attendance were Roman Catholic. Ten percent were non-denominational, nine percent Episcopal, and eight percent Pentecostal. Forty denominations and organizations were involved in the congress, and fifty nations were represented among the speakers and those in attendance.

Roughly 200 speakers participated in the congress, and there were more than 150 exhibitors."

In the light of this spectacular growth of the Charismatic Movement and its influence on Christendom today, we cannot and dare not ignore it. It needs to be carefully examined and evaluated by Scripture—which is our final standard for faith and practice. Numbers or popularity are no proof of God's favor or of the correctness of doctrine (2 Tim. 4:1-4). Consider Jeremiah. In his day when apostasy was rampant in Judah, he stood alone for the truth (Jer. 9:1-9; 26:8-9). He was despised, ridiculed, and persecuted.

But the great majority was WRONG! We are living in a similar time of great apostasy (so prophesied--2 Thess. 2:1-12). Great deception is invading the churches. Let's heed the warning of God's Word: "Let no man deceive you!" (2 Thess. 2:3)

CHARISMATICS AND REVIVAL

Charismatics generally believe that their rapid growth will result in a revival that will prepare the world for Christ's coming. Chairman of the 1990 Indianapolis Congress, Vinson Synan, in his welcoming address said, "We believe that a mighty worldwide renewal and revival in the churches will make the 1990s the greatest decade of evangelization in the history of the church" (O TIMOTHY, Vol. 7, Issues 8-9, 1990).

But we must ask, "Is what we see genuine or counterfeit revival?" Speaking of "the last days" of the church age, the Apostle Paul, in 2 Timothy chapter 3, warns us of "perilous times" ... that men shall have "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away" ... that they would never "come to the knowledge of the truth" ... would "resist the truth" ... would be "reprobate concerning the faith" ... and that "evil men and seducers shall become worse and worse [not better and better], deceiving and being deceived."

Again, in 2 Thessalonians 2, the Apostle warns the church of a "falling away" (v. 3)--a great apostasy that will usher in "that man of sin, the son of perdition ... even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders ... with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

Please note that there will be Satanic "power, signs, and lying wonders" in the last days. Compare that with the "miracles, signs, and wonders" emphasis so prominent in Charismatic circles today.

This scenario that Paul describes is far from that of a worldwide revival!

But Charismatics will dispute this, referring to Acts 2:16-21 where the Apostle Peter speaks of a Spirit outpouring in "the last days." What does Peter mean? Is he contradicting Paul? How can these two prophecies be reconciled?

Briefly, we must remember that Peter is speaking to Israel, and that he is quoting from the Book of Joel, where that prophet describes God's judgment upon unrepentant Israel, but also God's future restoration of that nation to His favor, an outpouring of His Spirit upon them, and great future blessing. To this agree the words of the Old Testament prophets. Please read Ezekiel 39:25-29; Isaiah 32:14-18; Zechariah 2:11-13; Zechariah 12:10.

Paul is in complete agreement with the Old Testament prophets, as he so plainly tells us in Romans chapter 11. Notice particularly verses 25 and 26:

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits: that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved ..."

No, there is no contradiction here when we differentiate between Israel and the Church! Let's not confuse God's wonderful promises to Israel in her "last days" with His prophecies to the Church. For Israel, after much suffering, there awaits a glorious future accompanied, of course, by a great work (outpouring) of the Holy Spirit. For the Church the "last days" will be times of a great "falling away," so much so that the Lord Jesus Himself warned us in Luke 18:8--"When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

CHARISMATICS AND TRUTH

To every serious Bible-believing Christian student truth is of paramount importance. When truth is suppressed, displaced, or denied, it becomes a very serious matter. For years the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement has been rather indifferent to this fact. Confused teaching regarding the work and gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as claiming that the Baptism and the Filling of the Holy Spirit are synonymous. They have also put "experience" above the written Word, and they value "tongues speaking" (is it ever questioned or tested to see if it is genuine?) above and beyond what the Bible allows. And they continue to practice being "slain-in-the-spirit" in spite of the fact that there is no New Testament Scripture which shows that Christians in the early church had such experiences. In fact, this practice seems to be more closely related to the occult and the working of evil spirits.

Is there any improvement in the Movement in this area? Obviously not!

Instead, there is a growing toleration of error! For example, there was a time not long ago when Pentecostal people would not think of tolerating or accepting Catholic doctrines, such as the mass. Things are different today.

Hear what a Pentecostal-Charismatic leader, Vinson Synan, chairman of the New Orleans '87 Charismatic Congress said to the non-Catholic participants:

"If you want to see something beautiful, come see a spirit-filled Catholic mass!" What spiritual folly and blindness! There is nothing "beautiful" about false doctrine, especially that taught in the Roman mass. And it certainly is not a "Holy Spirit filled" mass! The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth and not the spirit of error (1 Jn. 4:6).

Another example: David DuPlessis, an international Pentecostal leader known as "Mr. Pentecost," in the book *A Man Called Mr. Pentecost*, describes his experiences as he attended sessions of the 1964 Vatican Council in St. Peter's Basilica, Rome, in these words:

"I sat virtually alone as the special mass was celebrated ... I was certain I could feel the fresh breezes of the Holy Spirit in that colorful, yet sadly solemn, and heavily liturgical moment in church history. Yet, as happened every morning during my weeks there, I felt myself melting and breaking, actually weeping openly as the mass unfolded" (David DuPlessis as told to Bob Slosser, *A Man Called Mr. Pentecost*, Plainfield: Logos International, 1977, p. 215).

Describing a session of the 1975 Congress on the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church, held in St. Peter's Basilica, Mr. DuPlessis said:

"During the celebration of the Eucharist, there was singing with the Spirit, gently, tenderly, reverently and absolutely fitting. It was indeed a Pentecostal service, with Pentecostal manifestations and very evident Pentecostal blessings ... no one had expected such a rich and positive manifestation of a new Pentecost" (*A Man Called Mr. Pentecost*, p. 239).

Our question is this: If this was indeed a genuine moving of the Holy Spirit, a "new Pentecost," why would the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, choose to thus reveal Himself and bless during the celebration of a heretical Catholic mass?

Today, too, there is a growing trend among Charismatics to emphasize the ministry of "prophets." A generation of "new prophets" is coming on the scene. These new leaders continue to preface their "prophecies" with "thus saith the Lord," "God told me," "God spoke to me," "God's message for you is ..." And thousands are deceived into believing that these "messages" are from God Himself, even as Scripture is. The terrible fact is that so many of these "prophecies" are not accurate, are contrary to Scripture, are counterfeit, leading many unwary souls astray. If these "prophecies" were genuinely from the Lord, Holy Spirit inspired, there would NO error! The fact that there is error at all (some admit up to 35% error and even more) proves that this is not a work of the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of truth (Deut. 18:22).

Many strange and bizarre doctrines are either being revived, such as the "Manifest Sons of God" teaching, or are being introduced as a result of new "prophecies." And naturally

so, when Scripture is replaced by so-called prophecies, foolish, false, damnable doctrines will result. Remember! The Scriptures warn us repeatedly about false prophets, especially in the last days (Matt. 24:11,24; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 1 Jn. 4:1).

Beware! There is only one "sure word of prophecy" (1 Pet. 1:19)--the written Word which was "once [for all] delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

For further information on modern "prophets," see O TIMOTHY magazine, Vol. 7. Issues 8-9, 1990, and Vol. 7. Issue 10, 1990. This is available from Way of Life Literature, 1219 N. Harns Road, Oak Harbor, Washington 98277. See also "Latter Day Prophets—The Kansas City Connection" by Albert James Dager (Media Spotlight, P.O. Box 290, Redmond, Washington 98073).

CHARISMATICS AND ECUMENICITY

There also is an accelerating movement toward ecumenicity, as the previous paragraphs indicate. At New Orleans '87, of the 40,000 present, about one-half were Roman Catholics. At Indianapolis '90, of the roughly 25,000 present, about 48% were Roman Catholics. At these conferences, Charismatics from many denominations, including the Catholics, mingle and fellowship together in an ecumenical unity that is not based on sound Biblical beliefs, but largely on a common "experience," that of "tongues speaking." This is indeed a shaky foundation for fellowship or unity, especially as "tongues speaking" is and can be counterfeited. We must ask: Are these modern "tongues" the same as those referred to in the book of Acts?

Regarding "experience," the Mormons also believe in and experience "tongues speaking," and they also use "experience" to prove that the book of Mormon is true by urging readers to test it by reading till they experience a "burning in the bosom." And Mormons testify to this experience. Question: Does this "burning in the bosom" experience really prove that the book of Mormon is genuine Scripture? I believe not! "Experience" is not a reliable foundation for faith or practice. Yet Charismatics by the millions are building their fellowship and unity upon it. This error will ultimately lead to greater deception, acceptance into fellowship of even non-christian religious organizations, and acceptance of the papacy as the head. It will finally become a part of the Anti-Christ world church (Revelation chapters 17,18).

In Acts chapter 8 we read of a man named Simon who had miraculous powers and had persuaded the Samaritans that he was God's man. They said, "This man is the great power of God" (v. 10). But they were wrong, as verses 18- 24 clearly indicate. The miraculous powers exhibited by this man were Satan's counterfeits. The Samaritans were deceived by this man's ability to perform the miraculous.

The "Miracles, Signs and Wonders" emphasis in the Charismatic Movement today is ensnaring millions. They are basing their faith on "experiences" and not on the Scriptures. Remember that "in the last days ... evil men and seducers shall become worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:1,13).

Miracles will be prominent in the last days, but they will not necessarily be of God, but Satanic. People will "experience" these things, and be deceived by them (Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:8-12; Rev. 13:11-18). John Wimber and his Vineyard organization is a strong exponent of miracles, signs, and wonders.

These are days of great deception when we need to stand very firmly on the written Word of God. "Let no man deceive you"! (2 Thess. 2:3).

CHARISMATICS AND EVANGELISM

Have charismatics forgotten the true Gospel? Are they preaching "another gospel" (Gal. 1:6-7)? Apparently so. Look at David DuPlessis' statement again:

"I recalled that, in only a few years, the Catholics had already taken the message of Pentecost to ninety-two countries" (*A Man Called Mr. Pentecost*, p. 243).

Notice that the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:3-4) has been displaced by another message! Christ commanded us to "preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15). Is Mr. DuPlessis accepting the ministry of charismatic Catholics as the proclamation of the genuine Gospel of Christ's crucifixion, burial, and resurrection, or is he rejoicing that "another gospel" (charismatic) is being preached? The Lord's command is not just "to preach," or to preach any kind of message, or any kind of doctrine, but to preach "the Gospel." To do anything less is to invite God's curse (Gal. 1:8-9).

It was "the Gospel" that Paul proclaimed (1 Cor. 2:2; 15:1-4) and of which he was "not ashamed" (Rom. 1:16), and of which he said, "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ..." But Charismatics are seeking another kind of "power."

Not only are Charismatics replacing the all-important message, "the Gospel," but are failing to "preach the Gospel to every creature." Exceptions are now being made. Just a few years ago the practice was to send missionaries to Catholic countries to evangelize Catholics. Today, instead of evangelizing them they have a tendency to join them and work together alongside them in evangelizing others.

In the Aug.-Sept. 1977 issue of *Melodyland Magazine*, Ralph Wilkerson, in an article entitled, "Becoming One that the World Might Be Won," wrote about a Charismatic gathering held in Latin America:

"The morning before we left to come home, DuPlessis spoke to us from John 17:21. Later in the meeting, a Roman Catholic priest from Guatemala City spoke in an unknown tongue, and the interpretation was given by an American pilot. ... The interpretation was that the Roman Catholics and Protestants will march together around Latin America demonstrating unity, and once they do this, the

world will believe. ... There will be approximately 1,000 teams, with each team made up of a Catholic and a Protestant from Latin America."

Strange? I wonder what kind of "gospel" they will preach?

But this should not really surprise us because back in 1975 David DuPlessis already recognized the Catholic Church as part of Christ's body. Writing about his participation in the 1975 Congress on the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church, in St. Peter's Basilica, he stated: "[We] knew that we were first-hand witnesses to another of the mighty surges that the Lord was more and more frequently sending upon His body, Catholic and Protestant alike" (*A Man Called Mr. Pentecost*, p. 237).

Today that recognition of the Catholic Church has grown immensely. So, why evangelize the Catholic millions! Just accept them as they are in spiritual darkness and error and work side-by-side with them to convert the world "by the year 2000"! But we MUST ask: To WHAT or to WHOM will they be converted?

In 1 Chronicles 12:32 we read of "men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." In these confusing days we need to "understand" our times. This can only be done by a careful and prayerful study of and dependence on the written Word of God. Psalm 119:130 states:

"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."

"Forever, O LORD, Thy Word is settled in heaven." (Psa. 119:89)

HELPFUL BOOKS ON THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Baxter, Ronald E. *Charismatic Gift of Tongues*. Kregel Publications, P.O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2607.

Baxter, Ronald E. *Gifts of the Spirit*. Kregel Publications, P.O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2607.

Dyck, Carl. *William Branham: The Man and His Message*. Western Tract Mission, 401 - 33rd St. West, Saskatoon, Sask., Canada S7L 0V5.

Ewin, Wilson. *The Spirit of Pentecostal-Charismatic Unity*. Bible Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1348, Nashua, NH 03061.

Ewin, Wilson. *You Can Lead Roman Catholics to Christ--Charismatic* 1980s Edition. Bible Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1348, Nashua, NH 03061.

Gardiner, George E. *The Corinthian Catastrophe*. Kregel Publications, P.O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2607.

Gromacki, Robert G. *The Modern Tongues Movement*. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Box 817, Phillipsburg, NJ 08865.

Harlow, R.E. *The Complete Thing*. Everyday Publications, 421 Nugget Ave., Unit 2, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada M4C 3T4.

Long, David Boyd. *What the Bible Teaches about the Gift of Tongues*. Everyday Publications, 421 Nugget Ave., Unit 2, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada M4C 3T4.

MacArthur Jr., John F. *The Charismatics*. Zondervan Publishing Company, 1415 Lake Drive SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

Mackay, Harold. *Speaking in Tongues*. Everyday Publications, 421 Nugget Ave., Unit 2, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada M4C 3T4.

Mayes, Charles W. *A Look at the Modern Healing Movement*. BMH Books, P.O. Box 544, Winona Lake, IN. 46590

Mayhue, Richard. *Divine Healing*. Moody Press, 820 North LaSalle Drive, Chicago, IL 60610.

Pyle, Hugh F. *Truth about Tongues*. Accent Books, Accept Publications, P.O. Box 15337, Denver, CO. 80215.

Ryrie, Charles C. *The Holy Spirit*. Moody Press, 820 North LaSalle Drive, Chicago, IL 60610.

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Strauss, Lehman. *Be Filled with the Spirit*. Zondervan Publishing Company, 1415 Lake Drive SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

Taylor Sr., Franklin D. *Should I Speak in Tongues?* Everyday Publications, 421 Nugget Ave., Unit 2, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada M4C 3T4.

Unger, Merrill F. *The Baptism and Gifts of the Holy Spirit*. Moody Press, 820 North LaSalle Drive, Chicago, IL 60610.

Walvoord, John F. *The Holy Spirit*. Zondervan Publishing Company, 1415 Lake Drive SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

Williams, John. *The Holy Spirit Lord and Life-Giver*. Loizeaux Brothers, P.O. Box 277, Neptune, NJ 07754-0277.
