

Project Wittenberg

The Charismatic Movement and Lutheran Theology

Conclusion and Notes

A Report of the
Commission on Theology and Church Relations
of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod

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III

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. A Response to Issues Raised by the Charismatic Movement Within Lutheranism [\[17\]](#)

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

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

2. The Promise of the Spirit. In accord with Jesus' promise (Acts 1:4, 5, 8), the followers of Christ were baptized with the Holy Spirit on the first Pentecost when the Spirit's presence and power were manifested in a most remarkable manner, and three thousand of those in attendance were converted to the Christian faith. Whether baptism in the Holy Spirit was a once-for-all event that occurred solely on Pentecost or an experience that would be repeated in the Christian church throughout the centuries cannot be determined with certainty. But it is quite clear from Scripture that "the gift of the Holy Spirit" has been promised to all generations of Christians. (Acts 2:39) While we Christians rejoice in this gracious promise, we should recognize that this gift of the Spirit does not necessarily include the promise of all extraordinary spiritual gifts that were once given to the apostolic church, such as speaking in tongues, miracles of healing, or prophecy. According to the pattern of Sacred Scripture, God does not necessarily give His church in all ages the same special gifts; instead, He bestows His blessings according to His good pleasure and the needs of the church.

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

3. Christological Concerns. In view of present world conditions, many Christians welcome the greater emphasis that has been placed on the work of the Holy Spirit in recent years. They yearn for a spiritual renewal in the church, for a greater amount of zeal and commitment and for less apathy in carrying on the Lord's work, and for power in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations. Christians in general are agreed that there is great need for a deeper appreciation of the work of the Spirit in the church today. But in the light of recent developments in Christendom, the Lutheran Church is also deeply concerned lest the function of the Spirit be emphasized in a manner that would tend to make the saving work of Christ appear less important. This may be the unintentional result of teaching a Christian that it is necessary for him to experience two separate encounters: first, an encounter with Christ for conversion and forgiveness; and second, a further encounter with the Spirit to obtain power to serve effectively in Christ's kingdom. Lutherans believe that when they have Christ by faith, they also have the Holy Spirit and with Him all that is necessary for time and eternity as far as their spiritual life is concerned. The work of Christ may also appear less important when baptism in the Holy Spirit is emphasized in such a way as to detract from the importance the Scripture places on baptizing with water or, as it is called in the Book of Acts, "baptism in the name of Jesus." History indicates rather clearly that those denominations that in the past have placed particular emphasis on Spirit baptism have also considered water baptism to be of less significance.

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

The Christian must exercise special caution as he defines the relationship between the Spirit and Jesus in the state of humiliation, lest he embrace a form of subordinationism. Scripture does indeed portray Jesus' ministry as

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

However, especially in the Gospel of St. John, Jesus is portrayed as the One who sends forth the Spirit to be a **parakleetos**, a Counselor and Comforter who shall abide with His church and equip it with the power needed to perform its task in evangelizing the world. Moreover, the Scriptures also make it clear that the Holy Spirit's work is not to exalt Himself above the Father and the Son but to lead men to confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ and to recognize His Father as their own. In presenting this important doctrine, one must be extremely careful, therefore, not to teach a subordinationism of either the Son or the Spirit. Although the relationship between these two Persons is presented in Scripture from both points of view, the Bible clearly teaches that the three Persons in the Trinity are coequal. A proper understanding of Spirit theology is dependent on a correct view both of the Trinity and of the personal union of the two natures in Christ.

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

Lutheran theologians are concerned, therefore, when baptism in the Spirit is viewed as a second work of the Spirit in addition to and beyond conversion and sanctification, and when the Christian is required to fulfill certain preconditions before receiving Spirit baptism, such as earnest wrestling with God, heart purification, complete obedience, yielding, surrendering oneself to God, and exercising "total faith," which is different from ordinary trust in Christ. The frequent charismatic emphasis that only those who are properly disposed to receive the baptism of the Spirit through an attitude of expectancy, openness, and searching will actually receive it, as well as attempts to train people to receive such gifts of the Spirit as speaking in

tongues, may actually cultivate the notion that man's effort in some way is essential for the reception of God's free gifts. In his Epistle to the Galatians, St. Paul emphatically states that the Christians in Galatia had received the Spirit not by the works of the Law but by hearing with faith. (Gal. 3:5)

5. Means of Grace. Lutherans are deeply concerned when the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit is treated as the means by which God equips the church for her mission in the world, particularly when the baptism in the Spirit is regarded (in practice, if not in theory) as a supplement to the means of grace. Both the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions teach that the Word and the sacraments are the only means of grace and that the Holy Spirit always accompanies their use and through them bestows on the church **all** the blessings that are ours in Christ as well as every spiritual gift that is needed to carry out the mission of the church in a sinful world (cf. Matt. 28:19; Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 11:26; Luke 16:29). Beyond the Word and sacraments nothing is needed to equip the church for its task, for through them the Spirit gives life, power, and growth to the church. Christians will therefore continue to seek power and renewal for the church in the Word and sacraments, not in special signs and miracles. [18]

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

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

In this connection it needs to be underscored that the Holy Spirit is given through the preaching of the work of Christ, that is, the Gospel -- not through preaching about the Holy Spirit and His gifts (important as that is). The emphasis of our Lutheran heritage on the external Word as the instrument of the Holy Spirit helps prevent a subjectivism that seeks divine comfort and strength through an interior experience rather than in the objective word of the Gospel. To accent the former rather than the latter as the basis of Christian certainty can easily lead either to pride or despair instead of humble trust in the Gospel promises.

Moreover, when baptism with the Holy Spirit is considered to be a second experience beyond the sacrament of Holy Baptism and when it is said to grant powers and blessings that are not given through the Word and sacraments, the result is a view that fails to take into account the full benefits of Holy Baptism. Our Lutheran Confessions state that Baptism grants to the believer "the grace, Spirit, and power to suppress the old man so that the

new may come forth and grow strong." [20]

6. Unity of the Church. When Scripture discusses the unity of the Christian church, it always involves the activity of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who produces the fellowship of believers in the body of Christ. It is the Spirit who endows the members of the church with gifts by which they can serve one another in the kingdom of God. Christian unity must be unity in the Spirit. It is therefore unfortunate that the neo-Pentecostal distinction between Spirit-baptized Christians and other Christians easily fosters the incorrect and divisive notion that the former constitute a spiritually elite class of Christians. The faith that unites **all** believers to Christ and to one another also makes **all** members of His body equally acceptable to God (cf. Eph. 4:3-6). In the body of Christ, the Spirit "apportions to each one individually as He wills" (1 Cor. 12:11). Spiritual gifts are to be used in humble service and not as an occasion for anyone "to think of himself more highly than he ought to think." (Rom. 12:3 ff.)

7. Unionism. It is not in keeping with the Lutheran Confessions to maintain that when Christians are agreed on the theology of the Holy Spirit or share the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit, there exists a sufficient basis for the exercise of Christian fellowship. Although Lutherans may feel a close affinity with other Christians who agree regarding the experience of baptism in the Spirit, they are reminded that The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod seeks agreement in the doctrine of the Gospel, in **all** its articles, and in the right use of the holy sacraments as the Scriptural basis for the practice of fellowship. [21] **All** Biblical doctrine is taught by the Holy Spirit. Unionistic worship with those who deny doctrines of Holy Scripture dishonors the Holy Spirit and fails to give a proper Christian witness to the erring brother.

8. Biblical Authority and Interpretation. Charismatic Christians generally manifest a high regard for the authority of Holy Scripture and frequently display an impressive knowledge of its contents. This can only be commended. However, caution needs to be observed by charismatic groups lest they in practice come to depend more on charismatic speech than on the Biblical word. [22] Moreover, many charismatic Christians give the impression that they read the Scriptures more from the perspective of Spirit baptism than from the Christ-centered, soteriological perspective that is central in Lutheran theology. While all Christians need to become more keenly aware of the rich Biblical testimony to the person and activity of the Holy Spirit, it should not be forgotten that the primary purpose of the Spirit's work, including the inspiration of Holy Scripture, is to make men wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

9. Miraculous Healing. The charismatic movement has brought about an increased interest in miraculous healing. Today many testimonies are being given by Christian people to the effect that God has healed their ills and cured their sicknesses without the use of medical help, solely in answer to their prayers and by the laying on of hands.

As these instances multiply and these testimonies increase, the question is

being raised: What shall the church say to the claim that healing miracles are being performed among God's people also today by the power of the Holy Spirit?

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

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

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

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

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

b. It needs to be remembered that God wants Christians to concern themselves with the physical needs of their fellowmen. The Bible gives many directives in that regard, and the church seeks to carry out the will of its Lord by praying fervently for healing in times of sickness and by using the earthly means that God in His goodness has provided for the healing of the physically and mentally distressed. It gratefully acknowledges as a blessing from God the healing ministry performed by doctors, nurses, and others who are skilled in the care and treatment of disease. The Christian will also seek personally to alleviate the sufferings and quiet the pains of his fellowmen to the extent that this is possible.

c. The child of God is grateful to his Lord when he is spared physical distress and affliction, but he also recognizes that illness and misfortune in general do not represent man's greatest evil, nor is physical health and prosperity man's greatest good. Many a believer has learned that there can be a victorious faith in Christ when there is no bodily healing and a glorious witness to the grace of God in the midst of suffering. Therefore, while the Christian prays for healing and earnestly hopes for recovery, he nevertheless submits patiently to the will of God since he knows that all things work together for good to them that love God.

d. The child of God is also aware that he is not yet in the realm of glory where sin and pain will disappear. Instead, he recognizes that according to the good and gracious will of God he is in a world where sin, sickness, and death are still very evident. He knows that the kingdom of God has been inaugurated, and in this he rejoices, but the final victory has not yet been consummated. Christ has atoned for sin, but its earthly consequences still remain. For the Christian these are chastenings, and he takes seriously the Biblical exhortation: "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by Him. For the Lord disciplines him whom He loves and chastises every son whom He receives" (Heb. 12:5-6). We do not assume that it is the will of God that even in this life we must be free of all anguish and physical distress, for pain and suffering can also be a blessing from God. (Cf. Rom. 8:28.)

e. The Christian does not expect to manipulate or control God, even with his prayers. He would hesitate to have in his own hands the power of life and death. With the psalmist he confesses: "Thou art my God. My times are in Thy hand" (Ps. 31:14-15). In both joy and sorrow, the Christian knows that God does not abdicate. While He graciously invites us to seek His face in confident prayer, He and His will remain sovereign. The child of God prays confidently and persistently but with the provision "Lord, if it is Thy will."

B. THE PRIMARY ISSUES

As the church seeks to resolve the tensions that have arisen within its midst

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

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

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

1. The Centrality of the Gospel. Lutherans have always agreed that the central and most important teaching of Scripture is the Gospel, which brings the good news that the sinner is justified by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith. This is the doctrine by which the Christian church stands or falls. It is the article of faith in which all the sacred truths of Scripture converge. Neo-Pentecostal theology, with its special emphasis on baptism in the Holy Spirit as a second major experience in the Christian's life, sometimes tends to be more Spirit-centered than Christ-centered (in practice, if not in theory). This in turn lends itself to an understanding of the person and work of Christ that obscures His glory and benefits.

2. The Power and Sufficiency of the Means of Grace. Lutherans have always believed that through the Word and sacraments the Holy Spirit bestows on the believer **all** the blessings and spiritual gifts that are ours in Christ. The view that God gives His Holy Spirit apart from the "external word" is rejected by the Confessions as "enthusiasm." Neo-Pentecostal theology, with its emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a new source of power and assurance for the Christian and with its claim that God communicates directly with believers through prophecy, visions, tongues, or other means, easily leads to a practical (if not theoretical) diminution of the significance of the means of grace.

3. The Unity of the Church. Lutherans confess that all who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are one in Christ and one with each other. We therefore reject improper distinctions between members of the one holy Christian church (cf. Gal. 3:28). Moreover, Christians are "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). Although the charismatic movement is sometimes described by its proponents as fostering the unity of the church through the baptism of the Spirit, the fact remains that neo-Pentecostal theology, with its distinction between Spirit-baptized Christians and other Christians, tends to create disharmony and disunity within the Christian church.

4. The Nature of Spiritual Gifts. Lutheran theology has stressed the importance of such fruits of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness rather than extraordinary charismatic gifts. Moreover, it has emphasized that all fruits and gifts of the Spirit are given by grace alone. It has not understood the Scriptures to say that Christians are to expect extraordinary charismatic gifts in all ages of history, nor has it taught that speaking in tongues is the usual manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Neo-Pentecostal theology, with its claim that extraordinary charismatic gifts are the normal expectation of the church in every age, places greater importance on such gifts than the Scriptures do. Moreover, certain neo-Pentecostal accents sometimes give the erroneous impression that God's gifts are at least partially dependent on human efforts.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

Prayerful study needs to be given to those passages of Scripture that describe

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

2. Admonish and Encourage the Brethren. As members of Christ's body who are sincerely interested in the spiritual well-being of our brethren, we should admonish and encourage one another with love and patience. When offense is given because of conduct or doctrine that is contrary to God's Word, care should be taken that proper brotherly procedures are followed and that the reasons for admonition or discipline are fully understood. Christian admonition and discipline are always evangelical and have as their goal the restoration of the brother.

3. Test the Spirits. Christians who are convinced that they have received a charismatic experience should earnestly seek to evaluate it and determine its validity not only on the basis of personal feelings and emotions but especially in the light of God's holy Word. Followers of the Lord Jesus must take seriously the warnings of Scripture to "test the spirits to see whether they are of God" (1 John 4:1), lest we be led astray into a path that is injurious to our Christian faith and hope. Scripture particularly urges Christians to test occurrences that give the appearance of being valid signs and wonders, with the reminder that in the last days false prophets will arise who will seek to lead God's elect astray by such means. (Matt. 24:24, Mark 13:19-23; 1 Cor. 14:29)

Scripture suggests various ways in which Christians may test the spirits that have gone out into the world. (a) What do they say with regard to Christ? Do they steadfastly and clearly bear witness to His divine person and His work of salvation? Do they give greater attention to the cross and resurrection of our Lord than to various phenomenal experiences? (b) What fruits do they produce within the Christian congregation? Do they fulfill the simple service of Christian love among the people of God? Do they help edify the church, the body of Christ? (c) Do they accept what the Spirit of God teaches through His prophets and apostles in Holy Scripture? Do they accept what the apostle Paul has written "as a command of the Lord"? (Cf. 1 Cor. 14:37. Note that the apostle states in the next verse: "If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.")

4. Edify the Church. The Christian will also exercise all spiritual gifts that God has given him in a spirit of love and humility, fully aware that spiritual pride or undisciplined enthusiasm may cause serious offense to the body of Christ. Recognizing that spiritual gifts may be abused, the child of God will employ the gifts that God has given him with tact and Christian love, always endeavoring to edify the body of Christ and to exalt the Lord.

5. Know the Spirit. The rapid and widespread growth of the charismatic movement in our day may indicate the church's need to devote much greater attention to the work of the Holy Spirit. Christians today will particularly benefit from a more detailed articulation of Christ's promises regarding the Holy Spirit as these are set forth in Holy Scripture. As the church in our age prays with new earnestness, "Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord, Be all Thy graces now outpoured," it will also make every effort, particularly in its preaching and its various programs of instruction, to increase the church's awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the Holy Spirit and His gifts.

6. Use the Word and Sacraments. The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod should be alert to the fact that the charismatic movement within our own as well as other church bodies did not arise out of a vacuum. In the opinion of many Christians, it has arisen to meet a pressing need within Christendom to use every resource available in the service of Christ and His church and to claim the power that God promises us through the Holy Spirit in Word and sacraments. As we face the questions raised by the charismatic movement, we must earnestly endeavor to intensify and increase our use of Word and sacraments at every level of our existence so that the church may have a renewed sense of the joy, peace, and power God has promised.

Notes:

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

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

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

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

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

Lensch, Rodney. **A Missouri Synod Lutheran Pastor Is Baptized in the Holy Spirit.** Selma, Calio: Wilkins Printing and Publishing, 1969.

McDonnell, Kilian. "Catholic Problems in Evaluating Pentecostalism." **Dialog.** 9 (Winter 1970), 35-54.

Reports and Actions of the 2nd General Convention of the ALC, Columbus, Ohio, 1964, pp.148-164.

Schweizer, Eduard, and others. "Spirit of God." **Bible Key Words**, Vol. III. Translated from Gerhard Kittel's **Theologisches Worterbuch Zum**

Neuen Testament. New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1960.

Sherrill, John L. **They Speak with Other Tongues.** Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1965.

Stagg, Frank, E. Glenn Hinson, and Wayne E. Oates. **Glossolalia.** Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1967.

Williams, J. Rodman. **The Era of the Spirit.** Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1971.

The Work of the Holy Spirit. Report of the Special Committee on the Work of the Holy Spirit to the 182nd General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1970.

Wunderlich, Lorenz. **The Half-Known God.** St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963.

[2.] **The New Pentecostal Charismatic Revival Seminar Report,** Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, 1963, pp. 16-18.

[3.] Frederick Dale Bruner, **A Theology of the Holy Spirit** (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), p. 54.

[4.] Rodney Lensch, **A Missouri Synod Lutheran Pastor Is Baptized in the Holy Spirit** (Selma, Calif.: Wilkins Printing and Publishing, 1969), p. 14.

[5.] "Five Factors Crucial to the Growth and Spread of a Modern Religious Movement," in **Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion.** VII (Spring 1968), 30.

[6.] Ibid. See also **The Work of the Holy Spirit.** Report of the Special Committee on the Work of the Holy Spirit to the 182nd General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1970, p. 49.

[7.] "Final Progress Report, Glossolalia and Mental Health," a mimeographed report shared with the commission by its authors, Dr. John Kildahl and Dr. Paul Qualben. Page references in parentheses are to this report. The authors report that their findings will be published in a forthcoming book entitled **Glossolalia: The Practice of Speaking in Tongues.**

[8.] The information in this paragraph was provided by a group of Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod pastors involved in the charismatic movement. They met with a committee of the CTCR in St Louis on July 19, 1971, and provided additional information in writing.

[9.] The following statements were prepared on the basis of such Lutheran sources as booklets, position papers, essays, tape recordings, and personal interviews. It needs to be understood that the formulations are our own and that not all Lutheran charismatics necessarily hold all these positions. Among the Lutheran sources used in preparing this section are the following:

Christenson, Larry, **Speaking in Tongues and its Significance for the Church** (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1970), especially pp. 81, 87, 115, 134.

_____, "Come, Holy Spirit," Loaves and Fishes (June 1970)

Dorpat, D. M., "Prophecy, Preaching, and Enthusiasm: A Study of the Gifts of the Spirit in the Light of the Lutheran Confessions."

_____, "Luthercostals. A Look at Some Issues in the Charismatic Renewal from a Lutheran Perspective."

Heil, Robert, **A Position and Guidelines for Immanuel Lutheran Church. Crystal City, Missouri. Concerning the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and Its Attendant Gifts.** pp. 1-2.

Kellogg, John P., "The Baptism with the Holy Spirit," a conference paper presented to the Midland Circuit of the Michigan District, April 1968, pp. 4-5.

Lensch, Rodney, **A Missouri Synod Lutheran Pastor Is Baptized in the Holy Spirit** (Selma, Calif.: Wilkins Printing and Publishing, 1969), pp. 26-28.

Tape-recorded essays from the Lutheran Charismatic Conference, May 18-21, 1971, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri.

[10.] DM Dorpat, "Prophecy, Preaching, and Enthusiasm," a mimeographed essay distributed by the author, pp. 1,10.

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

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

[13.] Theodore Engelder, **Popular Symbolics** (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing

House, 1934), pp. 69-70, note 3.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[22.] It is not uncommon for charismatics to claim that God speaks directly and authoritatively through charismatic speech. J. Rodman Williams (in **The Era of the Spirit** [Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1971]), for example, states that such speech goes "beyond the words of Scripture" and is not "simply some exposition of Scripture," for "the Spirit as the living God moves through and beyond the records of past witness, however valuable such records are as model for what happens today" (p. 16). He notes that those gifted by the Spirit not only "unfold mysteries about the ways of God" but

may also provide "a word of guidance in economic, social or political affairs" (p. 22). He describes "prophecy" as "the very Word of God" with the same "Thus says the Lord" character as the words of Isaiah or Jeremiah (pages 28-29). He acknowledges that there must be a "weighing of things said" and states that such judgment is to be carried out by the "Spiritual community" (p. 22; cf. also note 8, pp. 29-30). Such statements are difficult to reconcile with the Lutheran position that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule and norm for Christian faith and life.

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

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