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Editorial

Once more this issue of ERT focuses on the renewal of the Church—on its true nature as "God's new society" (to use the title of John Stott's excellent commentary on Ephesians) and on its mission to the world. We make no apology for this emphasis, for there is no doubt that the Holy Spirit is calling the Church back to God and at the same time thrusting her out into the world. In many parts of the world the rising stream of conferences and study programmes on some aspects of revival and renewal is encouraging evidence of this awareness. The focus on the local church is to be welcomed, but only insofar as such communities of believers do not insulate themselves from each other and the universal Body of Christ. The local church needs to see the multiplicity of institutions and organisations with specific ministries not as para-Church, but as para-parochial agencies with goals common to their own. These organisations in turn must not become impatient with the local congregations but believe that God can and will renew His Church, including its structures. The Church is uniquely His agent for accomplishing Christ's mission in the world.

The Wheaton '83 conference, "I will build my Church" (June 20–July 2) is committed to seeking this integration of ministries. Through Bible study, prayer and the evaluation of numerous case studies, the nature and mission of the Church are being studied from the perspective of the local setting, the new frontiers for missions and the response to human need.

This call for renewal must be theological, spiritual and missiological. A deep conviction about the truth of the Gospel and our corporate task in the world is urgently needed. I find that in many countries churches are suffering from an identity crisis. In an age of cultural confusion and enormous human suffering and oppression, this is understandable. But confidence is ultimately found in the reality of interpersonal relationships. It is here that the renewing work of the Holy Spirit binds us to Christ and to each other. Such renewal inevitably results in mission, for only endowment with the power of the Spirit can motivate obedience to the Great Commission and give the sustaining strength to fulfil it. Our hope is in Christ Who said to Peter and the disciples, "I will build my Church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." p. 172

The Church as Holy and Charismatic

Howard A. Snyder

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"Charismatic" is to the contemporary Charismatic Movement what "Holiness" was to the most lively descendants of John Wesley in the nineteenth century. It is the "key word" and concept which best expresses the organizing center of a movement. Because of this, "charismatic"—like "holiness" and "pentecostal"—quickly becomes a slippery word and begins to take on different meanings for different people. But like so many words with a biblical base, it is too good a word to be abandoned because of differing meanings and

connotations. The danger is too great that in banning the word we may inadvertently close the door to an important area of truth or restrict the free operation of the Holy Spirit among us.[1]

It is fully appropriate, therefore, that we engage in a dialog with Charismatic Christianity. The term "Charismatic Christianity" in this paper is to be taken as referring to the contemporary Charismatic Movement (in its various forms) and, secondarily, to its Pentecostal antecedents. Despite the increasing awareness of common Charismatic, Pentecostal, and Holiness roots in the Wesleyan Revival, there has so far been little dialog between contemporary Wesleyans and the Charismatic Movement. The assignment of this topic is at least tacit recognition of the fact that we as Wesleyans have something to learn from, as well as to say to, contemporary Charismatics, and that in some way God is at work in the Charismatic Movement today. That recognition is, by the way, a thoroughly Wesleyan attitude.

How does a Wesleyan dialog with Charismatic Christianity? Rather than comparing elements of theology or practice point by point, I have chosen to proceed somewhat indirectly. Rather than discussing or evaluating the contemporary Charismatic or Pentecostal movements, I would like to address the central question which, it seems to me, Charismatic Christianity raises for us: In what sense is Christian experience, and the Church, charismatic? If the Charismatic Movement raises valid biblical questions for us (as I believe it does), then it is more important for us to deal with those questions than to merely catalog the pluses or minuses of the movement. p. 173

I will, therefore, first raise the question of the charismatic nature of the Church. Then we will look at Wesleyanism as a charismatic movement, examining history in the light of Scripture. Finally, I will make some remarks about Wesleyans and Charismatics today and offer some suggestions in the direction of a biblical Wesleyan ecclesiology—since the charismatic emphasis inevitably raises questions of ecclesiology.

I. THE CHARISMATIC NATURE OF THE CHURCH

Is the Church, biblically and properly understood, charismatic? W. T. Purkiser affirms, "In the New Testament use of the term, all Christians are charismatic."[2] But the obvious question becomes, what do we mean by "charismatic"?

The Meanings of Charismatic

In the popular mind "charismatic" is almost universally associated with "tongues." Only in very recent years, as the Charismatic Movement has matured and assumed somewhat varying forms, has that association begun to break down.

There are, of course, other associations to the term. We may distinguish three main meanings in popular usage: the sociological, the religious, and the biblical.[3] The

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[1] Note my discussion in *The Community of the King* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1977), pp.66–68.

[2] W. T. Purkiser, *The Gifts of the Spirit* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1975), p.17.

[3] See the helpful discussion in John Howard Yoder, "The Fullness of Christ: Perspectives on Ministries in Renewal," *Concern* No. 17 (February 1969), pp.63–64. For a discussion of "charismatic fullness" as this term was used by Daniel Steele, see Delbert R. Rose, "Distinguishing Things that Differ," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 9 (Spring 1974), 8–11.

sociological meaning traces back to Max Weber and is common today in the sense of the "charismatic leader"—whether political or religious, whose personal qualities are somewhat independent of official status or position. While this meaning distorts the biblical base, it ultimately springs from it. The popular religious meaning is also a distortion of the biblical base, both because of its almost universal association with tongues and because of the related notion that charismatic gifts are always dramatic and in some sense ecstatic or undisciplined. There is, however, an important biblical basis to what the word "charismatic" denotes. Both the popular sociological and religious meanings make it more difficult, but also more necessary, to go to Scripture with our questions. p. 174

The Biblical Meaning

The historical reasons for the close association of "charismatic" with tongues are obvious enough, and will require some comment later. Biblically, it is at least clear that tongues is one of the *charismata*, however we may understand that gift. But this is not the proper point to begin looking for the biblical meaning of the charismatic emphasis.

We could begin somewhat more broadly, examining the full range of New Testament charisms and discussing their relevance for the personal and corporate experience of believers. But a still broader and more fundamental biblical perspective begins with the very nature of God and His dealings with humankind.

The word "charismatic" derives, of course, from the Greek word *charisma*, "grace gift," and finally from *charis*, "grace." Related is the verb *charidzomai*, "to give freely or graciously as a favor."

With these words we come to the heart of the gospel. "For it is by grace [*charis*] you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Eph. 2:8–9).[4] God is graciously self-giving. His mercy and grace toward us as sinners, and toward the Church, are the foundation for the life of the Christian community.

This fact comes out clearly in several of the instances of *charidzomai* in the New Testament. For example, Romans 8:32—"He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give [*charisetai*] us all things?" God's gift of His own Son is the supreme manifestation of His grace and assures us that in Christ we will be given "all things" necessary to full Christian life and experience.

Paul was concerned to underscore the fact that salvation was a gracious gift, not a matter of works or law. So he argues in Galatians 3:18, "For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in His grace gave [*kecharistai*] it to Abraham through a promise."[5] Like Abraham, the people of God today are justified and live on the basis of a gracious promise.[6]

It is clear that the Church is in this fundamental sense charismatic. It is constituted and lives by God's grace. It has received the gift of God which is salvation through Jesus Christ. The gift is, in fact, Jesus Christ Himself—and, therefore, the Holy Spirit Himself.

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[4] All Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.

[5] The NIV brings out the force of the verb by saying, "God *in his grace* gave …"

[6] Note also Phil. 2:9; Col. 2:13; 2 Cor. 2:10 and 12:13; Eph. 4:33. The fact that *charidzomai* can also be translated "forgive" (as in the last passage) further underscores the essential nature of this emphasis and its ecclesiological importance.

Biblically, p. 175 this is the indispensable foundation for dealing with the question of the *charismata*.

It is not enough, however, to say only this much—to simply accept the word "charismatic" in this redefined (and more basic) sense without going on to ask how the *gifts* of the Spirit mentioned in the New Testament relate to the fact of the *gift* of the Spirit, of salvation by grace through faith. For the Church is also charismatic in the sense that God has apportioned a special measure of grace and giftedness to each believer (Eph. 4:7–8). God promises and gives gifts of the Holy Spirit for the edification of the Church that are consistent with the gracious work of the same Spirit in regeneration and sanctification.

It is not necessary, I think, to deal extensively here with the familiar Pauline passages on the *charismata* (Rom. 12:4–8; I Cor. 12–14; Eph. 4:7–16), or with such related passages as Hebrews 2:4; 1 Peter 4:10–11; and others. Ephesians 4 clearly indicates that the unity and oneness of the Church (4:3–6) are balanced by the diversity and mutuality of the Church as a gifted, charismatic community (4:7–16). The significant thing is that this understanding of the *charismata* is basic to Paul's whole concept of the Church as an organism created and sustained by the grace of God.

An examination of Ephesians 3:2–11 underscores this point and shows how closely *charis* and *charisma* were linked in Paul's thought. Paul says here that his hearers know of the administration or economy (*oikonomia*) of God's grace (*charis*) that had been given him (3:2). Paul had been given a special understanding of God's grace and a special commission to reveal and proclaim this to the Church, and especially to the Gentiles. In verse 7 he says, "I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power." Paul's phrase here is *dorean tes charitos*, literally "gift of the grace" of God, rather than *charisma*. Still, the meaning is clear: Paul himself had received a special charism, a gift of grace, to proclaim the full meaning of the gospel. In verse 8, Paul says "this grace [*charis*] was given me to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Here he substitutes the word "grace" for "gift of grace." For Paul, the *charismata* and God's grace were so intimately associated that he could sometimes use *charis* in the sense of *charisma*.

Paul thus saw his own ministry in charismatic terms. We know that Paul was very conscious of his apostleship, and further that he considered apostleship as one of the *charismata*—in fact, as the preeminent charismatic gift (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11). His description of his own ministry as "grace" and "gift of grace" underscores the fact p. 176 that Paul understood his own apostleship in such charismatic terms.

We see here also that Paul uses "grace" in two somewhat different senses. In Ephesians 2:8–9, it is the grace of salvation, God's gift through Christ by which we are saved. But in Ephesians 3:8 and 4:7 "grace" is associated with gifts and ministry so that *charis* becomes almost synonymous with *charisma*. Thus in Ephesians 4:7 Paul says, "to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it," and then goes on to speak of spiritual gifts. This distributing or apportioning of God's grace to individual believers for edification and ministry is basic to the discussion of 1 Corinthians 12, especially verse 4–7, and reminds us of the reference to "distributions of the Holy Spirit" in Hebrews 2:4.

Note the progression of Paul's thought in Ephesians 4:7. You have already been saved by God's grace, and so made one, he says. But within this unity is diversity. Grace has been given not only for your salvation, but also in the form of special endowment to enable each believer to be a useful, functioning member of the Body of Christ. What follows then, logically, is a discussion of the gifts of the Spirit.

Thus the Church is charismatic in these two senses. Fundamentally, it is charismatic in that it is called into being and constituted by God's gracious work of salvation effected by the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ. Secondly, it is charismatic in that God by

His Spirit works graciously in the Church to build up and equip it for ministry through the distribution of a variety of spiritual gifts.

Several things follow from this perspective. For one thing, spiritual gifts are not a peripheral or unimportant aspect of the Church's life but rather are integral to God's gracious action in the events of salvation. Secondly, this perspective underscores the ecclesiological reference of spiritual gifts. Gifts are not given for private spiritual enjoyment only, but for building up the Christian community. Conversely, gifts are not only a matter of the corporate life of the Church but are a very real part of personal Christian experience. In fact, both sanctification and the functioning of spiritual gifts have this in common: Individual Christian experience builds up the Body, and the Church nurtures the lives and ministries of individual believers through the building of a charismatic, sanctifying community. This is the meaning of Ephesians 4:1–16.

From this perspective, therefore, we can affirm that both Christian experience and the Church are charismatic—and that Christian experience *is* the experience of God in the life of the Christian community. p. 177

The Church as Charismatic

The past two decades have seen the emergence of a new awareness that the Church is in some sense charismatic—even though interpretations of just what this means vary widely. The Charismatic Movement has forced nearly all Christian traditions to re-examine what the Scriptures teach regarding the *charismata*. From an initially defensive reaction, a number of church bodies have come to at least some degree of recognition of spiritual gifts and some affirmation of the charismatic emphasis, though with important qualifications and safeguards. This has happened in varying degrees within the Holiness Movement[7] and particularly in my own denomination, the Free Methodist Church.

It is interesting to observe the re-examination of the charismatic emphasis in the Roman Catholic Church through the double impact of Vatican II and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. One of the finest statements on the *charismata* has come from Catholic theologian Hans Kung. In an essay entitled "The Charismatic Structure of the Church" Kung argues that "to rediscover the charismata is to rediscover the real ecclesiology of St. Paul."[8] He rightly suggests that we misunderstand the charismata when we think of them "mainly as extraordinary, miraculous and sensational phenomena," when we limit them to only one kind or category, or when we deny their universal distribution to all believers.[9] Kung adds, "All this implies … that [the *charismata*] are not a thing of the past (possible and real only in the early Church), but eminently contemporary and actual; they do not hover on the periphery of the Church but are eminently central and essential to it. In this sense one should speak of a *charismatic*

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[7] For growing recognition in the Church of the Nazarene of the practical place of spiritual gifts, see Frank Carver, "Spiritual Gifts and Church Growth: Biblical Perspectives in a Wesleyan Context" (manuscript copy, n.d.), 14 pp. Dr. Carver was the respondent to the present paper at the 1979 WTS meeting.

[8] Hans Kung, "The Charismatic Structure of the Church," in Hans Kung, ed. *The Church and Ecumenism*, Vol. 4 of *Concilium* (New York: Paulist Press, 1965), p.49. See also Kung, *The Church* (Garden City, New Jersey: Doubleday Image Books, 1976), especially pp.236–50.

[9] Kung, "The Charismatic Structure of the Church," pp.50–58.

structure of the Church which embraces and goes beyond the structure of its government."[10]

As Kung indicates, this emphasis becomes intensely practical when one begins to examine the life and ministry of the Christian community. "Where a Church or a community thrives only on office holders and not on all the members," he wonders "in all seriousness whether p. 178 the Spirit has not been thrown out with the charismata."[11]

This perspective obviously raises a number of questions for the Holiness Movement. The fundamental question becomes not exclusively the question of the legitimacy of specific spiritual gifts but the more basic question of whether we are building churches which are charismatic in the full, biblical sense—churches which function not merely on the basis of tradition and ecclesiastical structures but on the basis of the Holy Spirit working through both the individual and corporate life of believers. We need the uninhibited operation of all the gifts the Spirit sovereignly chooses to give us, for both biblical and pragmatic reasons. As James Dunn has written, "The inspiration, the concrete manifestations of Spirit in power, in revelation, in word, in service, all are necessary—for without them grace soon becomes status, gift becomes office, ministry becomes bureaucracy, body of Christ becomes institution, and *koinonia* becomes the extension fund."[12]

If we thus approach the "charismatic question" broadly and biblically, rather than narrowly and apologetically with reference to only one or two gifts, we must affirm that the Church is fundamentally charismatic. This affirmation implies at least four things:

1. *The Church exists and lives by grace*. It is the special sphere and evidence of God working graciously by His Spirit to convert, sanctify, equip, and minister through believers "to the praise of his glorious grace." The Church is charismatic because it is fundamentally a grace-endowed organism, not a legal or primarily institutional structure.

2. *The Church lives and functions by the action of the Holy Spirit and the distribution of the Spirit's gifts*. The charismatic nature of the Church underscores the importance of the Holy Spirit's endowment of believers with His gifts. The work of the Spirit is of course much broader than the distribution of gifts, as Wesleyans are quick to point out, but one cannot omit or downplay the role of spiritual gifts without doing violence to the New Testament.

3. *The charismatic emphasis focuses attention on the Church as community*. The fact of *koinonia*, of the Church as an intimate community of mutually dependent believers who constitute Christ's Body, is too often a casualty to the seemingly inevitable drift toward institutionalization in all churches, including those in our own tradition. Decline in awareness and use of spiritual gifts and decline in *koinonia* go together. Similarly, recovery of a balanced biblical p. 179 emphasis on the *charismata* leads toward a deepening of the awareness and experience of true Christian community. It is no accident that many branches of the Charismatic Movement have led the way in the recovery of a deeper level of Christian community, and it is my observation that many believers who have been attracted to the Charismatic Movement were initially drawn less by the emphasis on tongues or other gifts than by the level of caring, mutual love, and community which they witnessed among "charismatics."

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[10] Ibid, p.58.

[11] Ibid.

[12] James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (London: SCM Press, 1975), p.341.

4. Finally, *the charismatic emphasis implies some inevitable tension with institutional expressions of the Church*. The tension between Spirit and structure is ever present in the life of the Church (unless all life has vanished!) as the Wesleyan and Holiness movements can well testify.[13]

This does not mean, of course, that every "charismatic" manifestation is necessarily of the Spirit or that institutional structures are wrong. But it does suggest that whenever.the Spirit moves in the Church tension between "wine" and "wineskins" will result, and that the very immediacy of the work of the Spirit in human experience produces tensions with established patterns of life and order.

Charismatic and Holy

It should be clear that no conflict or *necessary* tension exists between the charismatic and holiness themes in Scripture, and in the life of the Church. In the New Testament there is no conflict between the gifts and the fruit of the Spirit. The same Holy Spirit who sanctifies is the Spirit who gives gifts. The same Jesus Christ who apportions grace-gifts in the Church is the Lord who has become our sanctification. The Church which is biblical will be both holy and charismatic, and all earnest Christians should be concerned that both the holiness and charismatic emphasis are fully biblical.

These two emphases are both necessary and are complementary. Each emphasis needs the other. Certainly this is so in Scripture, and it ought to be so in our personal and corporate Christian experience. The Church needs both the cleansing, sanctifying work of the Spirit and His gracious bestowal of the variety of spiritual gifts taught in Scripture.

The New Testament generally puts the charismatic emphasis in the context of the call for Christians to be God's holy, love-filled people. The teaching about gifts in Romans 12:4–8 is preceded by a call to holiness and followed by an emphasis on love. Ephesians 4:11–16 shows us how the holy, charismatic Christian community is to function. On the one hand, a variety of equipping *charismata* is given "to p. 180 prepare God's people for works of service" so that the body "grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." On the other hand, believers are to attain "the full measure of perfection found in Christ." "Speaking the truth in love," they are "in all things" to "grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ." The two emphases go together. The picture here is of believers individually and corporately growing up into the fullness of Christ through the exercise of gifts and through progress in sanctification. And this charismatic theme here underscores something that we in the Holiness Movement have insufficiently emphasized: the "fullness of Christ" which is our goal refers not primarily to individual experience but to the corporate life of the believing community. Sanctification, like the *charismata*, is for the Body and for each individual in the Body, not for isolated believers. This is, in fact, what John Wesley meant when he said that "Christianity is essentially a social religion; and … to turn it into a solitary religion, is to destroy it."[14]

II. WESLEYANISM AS A CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Reference to John Wesley provides a convenient point of transition to our second consideration. Is Wesleyan Christianity charismatic Christianity in the proper biblical meaning of the term? Is Wesleyanism a charismatic movement? Here it may be helpful to

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[13] See Jaroslav Pelikan, *Spirit Versus Structure* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968).

[14] John Wesley, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount," Discourse IV, *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, third ed. (London: John Mason, 1829–31), 5:296.

distinguish between the theology of John Wesley himself, the fact of the Wesleyan Revival in England, and the subsequent experience of the Holiness Movement.

John Wesley's Theology

A study of John Wesley's theology in the light of biblical charismatic themes shows that Wesley was charismatic, but that this must be said with certain qualifications. Wesley did not speak in tongues, of course (so far as we know), and in fact did not have to face this issue in the way we do today. He said comparatively little about the *charismata*—though more than most churchmen of his day. But viewing Christianity as charismatic in the proper biblical sense, we can describe Wesley's theology as charismatic.

1. *Wesley's theology is charismatic because it emphasizes God's grace in the life and experience of the Church*. Wesley was deeply conscious of the operation of the grace of God in individual experience and in the life of the Church—God's grace "preventing [or coming before], accompanying, and following" every person.[15] p. 181

Wesley was, if anything, *more* deeply conscious of God's grace than were the earlier Reformers. He had a deep optimism of grace that formed the foundation of his emphasis on the universal atonement, the witness of the Spirit, and Christian perfection. Here his stress on prevenient grace is especially important. As Colin Williams has observed, Wesley "broke the chain of logical necessity by which the Calvinist doctrine of predestination seems to flow from the doctrine of original sin, by his doctrine of prevenient grace."[16]

Thus Wesley argued, "there is no man that is in a state of mere nature; there is no man, unless he has quenched the Spirit, that is wholly void of the grace of God. No man living is entirely destitute of what is vulgarly called *natural conscience*. But this is not natural: It is more properly termed, *preventing grace* … no man sins because he has not grace, but because he does not use the grace which he hath."[17]

Wesley saw the whole plan of salvation as dependent upon the grace of God. It follows that the Church exists and lives by God's grace. Although Wesley said little specifically about the Church, as Church, being dependent on grace, this is the clear implication of his view of grace. Whenever he discusses the Church he stresses the spiritual, living meaning of any valid description or definition of it.[18] In this sense, Wesley's view of the Church is charismatic.

2. *Wesley's understanding of the Church and Christian experience can be described as charismatic because of the place of the Holy Spirit in his theology and because of his openness to the gifts of the Spirit*.

Without entering into the complex debate as to the precise role of the Holy Spirit in Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification or the appropriateness of terminology which emphasizes the role of the Spirit, one can at least affirm that the Holy Spirit played a significant role in Wesley's thought. It seems to me that Wesley was biblical in understanding salvation in strongly christological rather than primarily pneumatological

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[15] Sermon, "The Good Steward," *Works*, 6:147.

[16] Colin W. Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), p.44.

[17] Sermon, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," *Works*, 6:512.

[18] See, for example, my discussion in "Wesley's Conception of the Church," *The Asbury Seminarian*, 33:1 (January 1978), pp.38–41.

terms, but in stressing the role of the Spirit in testifying to Christ and making Him real to us in present experience. The "more excellent purpose" for which the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost was "to give them … the mind which was in Christ, those holy fruits of the Spirit, which whosoever hath not, is none of His."[19] p. 182

Wesley did not elaborate a complete doctrine of the gifts of the Spirit, but did say enough (mainly in response to charges that he himself pretended extraordinary gifts or inspirations) for us to understand his general perspective.

To interpret Wesley's view is complicated by the fact that he distinguished between *extraordinary* and *ordinary* gifts in a way that is not precisely biblical. Among the "extraordinary gifts" he included healing, miracles, prophecy (in the sense of foretelling), discernment of spirits, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, and he describes apostles, prophets, and evangelists as "extraordinary officers." The "ordinary gifts" include "convincing speech," persuasion, knowledge, faith, "easy elocution," and pastors and teachers as "ordinary officers."[20] The problem for interpretation is that Wesley seems to include more than the usually-identified *charismata* under "ordinary gifts" and he makes a distinction in 1 Corinthians 12 between gifts which are "extraordinary" or "miraculous" and others which are not.[21]

Wesley felt the ordinary gifts were operative in the Church in all ages and should appropriately be desired by Christians—though, of course, governed by love.[22] All the gifts, including the extraordinary ones, had been part of the experience of the Church during the first three centuries, he believed, but "even in the infancy of the church, p. 183 God divided them with a sparing hand," and principally to those in leadership.[23]

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[19] Sermon, "Scriptural Christianity," *Works*, 5:38.

[20] Ibid.; Sermon, "The More Excellent Way," *Works*, 7:27; *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament* (London: The Epworth Press, 1950), p.713 (on Eph. 4:8–11). In the *Explanatory Notes* Wesley usually employs the ordinary/extraordinary distinction, in contrast to Bengel, his source. Note, for instance, Wesley's comment on 1 Peter 4:10. Wesley often departs from Bengel in his comments on the gifts. The ordinary/ extraordinary distinction which Wesley makes with regard to gifts (as well as to offices) did not originate with him, but he took it over and strongly stressed it. See Wesley's "Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," I, Section V, in *Works* (Oxford ed.), 11:138–76.

[21] It has been suggested to me that Wesley's use of the term "extraordinary" is to be understood in contradistinction to the eighteenth-century ecclesiastical meaning of "ordinary," so that it would mean, in effect, "outside the normal ordained ministry" in a more or less technical sense. A search of several dictionaries does not bear this out, however. Even in Wesley's day "extraordinary" had the common sense of simply "outside of what is ordinary or usual" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 3:468, 472). Thus a 1706 London dictionary defines extraordinary as "beyond or contrary to common Order and Fashion, unusual, uncommon," and a dictionary published in London in 1790 has "Different from common order and method; eminent, remarkable, more than common." It appears that Wesley was using the term in the general and popular sense, not as a technical ecclesiastical designation. (This is underscored by the fact that Wesley seems to use "extraordinary" synonymously with "miraculous" when referring to the gifts.)

[22] *Works*, 7:27.

[23] *Works*, 5:38.

Did Wesley believe the extraordinary gifts could be expected in the Church in his day? This, of course, is an important question for our dialog with contemporary charismatic Christianity. Wesley writes:

> It does not appear that these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were common in the Church for more than two or three centuries. We seldom hear of them after that fatal period when the Emperor Constantine called himself a Christian; and, from a vain imagination of promoting the Christian cause thereby, heaped riches and power and honour upon the Christians in general, but in particular upon the Christian Clergy. From this time they almost totally ceased; very few instances of the kind were found. The cause of this was not, … "because there was no more occasion for them." … The real cause was, "the love of many," almost of all Christians, was "waxed cold." … This was the real cause why the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were no longer to be found in the Christian Church.[24]

The "grand reason why the miraculous gifts were so soon withdrawn," he writes, "was not only that faith and holiness were well nigh lost, but that dry, formal, orthodox men began even then to ridicule whatever gifts they had not themselves, and to decry them all as either madness or imposture."[25]

Wesley believed in the fall of the Church at the time of Constantine. But this did not mean all was hopeless in the present. God was doing a renewing work through Methodism in his own day, Wesley believed. Thus he nowhere rules out the possibility of new manifestations of the extraordinary gifts. He felt such gifts either "were designed to remain in the church throughout all ages" or else "they will be restored at the nearer approach of the 'restitution of all things.' "[26] Wesley had a fundamental, although somewhat hidden, optimism regarding such gifts. He advises Christians that the best gifts "are worth your pursuit, though but few of you can attain them."[27] "Perfecting the saints" in Ephesians 4:12 involves "the completing them both in number and their various gifts and graces." Gifts are given for their usefulness, by which "alone are we to estimate all our gifts and talents."[28] p. 184

Wesley thus believed that if the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were in little evidence in his day, this was because of the fallen state of the Church and represented a less than ideal situation. In fact God's power was still at work, though hindered by the general coldness and deadness of the church. Wesley certainly did not disparage the gifts, and despite his reticence concerning so-called extraordinary gifts, he valued all gifts and felt that in a fully restored, spiritual Church, all the gifts would be in evidence.

It was in this context that Wesley understood the gift of tongues. He wrote, "It seems 'the gift of tongues' was an instantaneous knowledge of a tongue till then unknown, which he that received it could afterwards speak when he thought fit, without any new

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[24] *Works*, 7:26–27.

[25] *The Journal of John Wesley, A.M.*, ed. Nehemiah Curnock (London: The Epworth Press, 1938 reprint), 3:490 (August 15, 1750).

[26] *Works*, 5:38.

[27] *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*, p.625 (1 Cor. 12:31). Note his comment on healing, p.623.

[28] Ibid., pp.713, 628 (Eph. 4:12; 1 Cor. 14:5).

miracle."[29] He understood tongues as the miraculous ability to speak an actual language, whether previously known or unknown. Because tongues is a gift of language, God might well not give it "where it would be of no use; as in a Church where all are of one mind, and all speak the same language."[30] But if one possesses the gift of tongues he should "not act so absurdly, as to utter in a congregation what can edify none but" himself. Rather he should speak "that tongue, if he find it profitable to himself in his private devotions."[31]

One cannot logically conclude from this, however, that Wesley would necessarily have opposed the modern phenomenon of glossolalia, for several reasons. First, Wesley never had to face precisely this p. 185 question.[32] Secondly, Wesley was an experimentalist, keenly interested in religious experience. Considering his reticence either to endorse or condemn rather unusual and emotional manifestations in his own meetings, one may conjecture that he would have taken a similarly moderate attitude regarding glossolalia.

Thirdly, Wesley's strong emphasis on the rational nature of faith does not permit one to say that he would have opposed glossolalia as irrational, for Wesley's view of reason was always tempered by experience. He reacted against an extreme rationalism as much as against any unbiblical "enthusiasm." He was ready to admit that the Christian faith, though rational, also transcends reason. As Albert Outler notes,

> Wesley had a remarkably practical rule for judging *extraordinary* gifts of the Spirit (ecstasies, miracles, etc.) … No profession of an "extraordinary gift" ("tongues" or whatever) is to be rejected out of hand, as if we knew what the Spirit should or should not

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[29] Ibid., p.631 (a comment not found in Bengel).

[30] Letter to the Reverend Dr. Conyers Middleton, *Works*, 10:56.

[31] *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*, pp.629, 631 (1 Cor. 14:15, 28). Here again Wesley inserts his own comment, not following Bengel. Is Wesley here referring to a "prayer language" in the modern Pentecostal sense when he makes this rather surprising remark? Probably not, if by this is meant a form of ecstatic utterance which bears no resemblance to known languages. He does seem to be allowing, however, for the normal use of a miraculously-given ability to use at will, with rational control, a language which the speaker (or pray-er) himself does not, or previously did not, understand. This comes very close to what many "charismatics" mean by a "prayer language," for, contrary to common caricatures, praying in an unknown tongue does not necessarily mean surrendering control of one's rational faculties. Also, it is interesting here thai Wesley allows for the use of tongues in private prayer, even though in that case no one but the speaker would be edified.

[32] Not that Wesley was totally unaware of contemporary instances of tongues-speaking. In his reply to Dr. Middleton he refers to the outbreak of tongues and other gifts among a persecuted band of rural Huguenots in southern France (the "little prophets of Cevennes"), beginning in 1688 (*Works*, 10:56). But little can be made of this, since Wesley gives no indication of what his evaluation was of this instance. Further, some scholars have contested the common claim that tongues-speaking in this case was ecstatic utterance. Several authors claim that this instance was the first recorded outbreak of glossolalia in modern times, after a "silent period" of one thousand years. See, among others, George Barton Cutten, *Speaking with Tongues Historically and Psychologically Considered* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927), pp.48–66; Morton Kelsey, *Tongue Speaking: an Experiment in Spiritual Experience* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), pp.52–55. Both Cutten and Kelsey refer to Wesley in this connection.

> do … What he *did* insist on was that such gifts are *never* ends in themselves, that *all* of them must always be *normed* (and judged) by the Spirit's "ordinary" gifts ("love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc., etc."). Like faith, all spiritual gifts are in order to *love*, which is the measure of *all* that is claimed to be from God, since God is love.[33]

In the light of these considerations, we have to conclude that precisely what position Wesley would take regarding glossolalia remains an open question, but he certainly would put the primary emphasis on love—both in the personal experience of the believer practicing gifts and in the attitude of others towards him or her.

In any case, Wesley's view of spiritual gifts is largely undeveloped. He was certainly more aware of, and more positive toward, the *charismata* p. 186 than most churchmen of his day.[34] But his understanding was complicated by the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary gifts, and for this and other reasons he failed to see the full practical significance of the *charismata* for the practical "building up" and ministry of the Christian community.

In summary, we may say that Wesley's theology at this point is charismatic, though not in the fully biblical sense.

3. *Wesley's theology is charismatic in its emphasis on the communitary nature of the Church*. Wesley clearly saw that there could be no true Church without genuine fellowship, and that this was an area where Methodism had a special role to play. Thus Wesley writes in his preface to *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (first edition, 1739),

> it is only when we are knit together that we "have nourishment from Him, and increase with the increase of God." Neither is there any time, when the weakest member can say to the strongest, or the strongest to the weakest, "I have no need of thee." Accordingly our blessed Lord, when His disciples were in their weakest state, sent them forth, not alone, but two by two. When they were strengthened a little, not by solitude, but by abiding with him and one another, he commanded them to "wait," not separate, but "being assembled together," for "the promise of the Father." And "they were all with one accord in one place" when they received the gift of the Holy Ghost. Express mention is made in the same chapter, that when "there were added unto them three thousand souls, all that believed were together, and continued steadfastly" not only "in the Apostles' doctrine," but also "in fellowship and in breaking of bread," and in praying "with one accord."[35]

Wesley goes on to quote from Ephesians 4:12–16, and it is in this connection that he comments, "The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness."[36] Thus in the context, "social" here means "communitary."

By Christian fellowship Wesley understood not merely corporate worship but watching over one another in love; advising, exhorting, admonishing, and praying with the brothers and sisters. "This, and this alone, is Christian fellowship," he said. And this is what Methodism promoted: "We introduce Christian fellowship where it was utterly

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[33] Albert C. Outler, "John Wesley as Theologian—Then and Now," *Methodist History*, 12:4 (July 1974), p.79.

[34] This is indicated both by Wesley's keen interest in all forms of religious experience and by his departure from Bengel in his comments on gifts in the *Explanatory Notes*.

[35] *Works*, 14:320–21.

[36] Ibid.

destroyed. And the fruits of it have been peace, joy, love, and zeal for every good word and work."[37] p. 187

The great instrument for promoting this quality of community or fellowship was, of course, the Methodist organization of society, class meeting, and band. For Wesley, the class meeting was an ecclesiological statement, and one integrally linked to Christian perfection. As Colin Williams writes, "Wesley's view of holiness was woven into his ecclesiology. He believed that the gathering together of believers into small voluntary societies for mutual discipline and Christian growth was essential to the Church's life." He "insisted that there must be *some* form of small group fellowship."[38] In Wesley's view, if believers were really serious in their quest for holiness they would band together in small groups to experience that level of community which is the necessary environment for growth in grace.

It seems clear that from this perspective also Wesley's theology is charismatic—and in a way that puts it in some tension with the more recent experience of Wesleyan groups which have wholly abandoned the class meeting.

4. *Wesley's theology is charismatic in the tension which it experiences with institutional expressions of the Church*. This is, in fact, one of the fundamental tensions in both Wesley's thought and his career—to affirm the validity of the largely decadent institutional church while seeing Methodism as more truly manifesting the essential marks of the Church, and to hold the growing Methodist movement within the bounds of the Church of England. This tension between institutional and charismatic tendencies, and this attempt to hold the two together by the animating power of the Spirit within the institution, goes in fact to the heart of Wesley's ecclesiology.

In summary, Wesley's theology is distinctly and fundamentally charismatic, although not in the full biblical sense. A more fully biblical view would require rethinking the ordinary/extraordinary distinction, relating gifts more fully and normatively to the various forms of Christian ministry, and more fully and adequately treating the question of the gift of tongues.

The Methodist Revival

Granted that Wesley's theology was in a fundamental sense charismatic, does it follow that early Methodism was a charismatic movement?

The parallels between early Methodism and the contemporary Catholic Charismatic Renewal are striking. Both are evangelical movements within a largely liturgical-sacramental Catholic tradition; both emphasize personal appropriation and experience of saving p. 188 faith through Jesus Christ; both combine the emphases of faith and holiness; both put strong emphasis on singing and praise; both maintain a strong sacramental emphasis, conduct separate meetings for worship and instruction, profess loyalty to the institutional church, claim to be biblical, and emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit (but not to the detriment of a balanced christological and trinitarian emphasis). Both employ a large corps of lay preachers. In fact, early Methodism much more resembles contemporary Catholic charismatic Christianity than it does Protestant Pentecostal and Charismatic manifestations. The one major difference between Catholic charismatic

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[37] "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists," *Works*, 8:251–52.

[38] Williams, pp.151, 150.

Christianity and Methodism is, of course, the peculiar place of the gift of tongues in the origin of Catholic charismatic Christianity.[39]

If we do not make glossolalia or other specific gifts the determining criterion, it is fully appropriate to speak of the Wesleyan Revival as a charismatic movement. It manifested the four features we have been discussing: an emphasis on or rediscovery of grace as the basis of Christian experience and the Church, an emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit as the source of the Church's life, the recovery of the experience of the Church as community, and tension with the institutional manifestation of the Church.

If the gifts of the Spirit played a relatively minor part in Wesley's own theology and understanding, their exercise played a major role in the growth of Methodism. A key to the Wesleyan system was Wesley's "lay" preachers, whom he considered as "*extraordinary messengers*, raised up to provoke the *ordinary* ones to jealousy."[40] Wesley thus considered his preachers as exercising a charismatic office, and so they did. His preachers were persons who demonstrated gifts for ministry, and Wesley put them to work, confirming their gifts.

The early Methodist system, in fact, gave ample opportunity for exercising a broad range of spiritual gifts. Among the functions within the Methodist societies were class leaders, band leaders, assistants, stewards, visitors of the sick, and schoolmasters.[41] While these functions do not seem to have been understood primarily on the basis of the *charismata*, the whole Methodist system in fact encouraged the kind of spiritual growth in which useful charisms would spring forth p. 189 and be put into useful service. Methodism thus provided considerably more opportunity for the exercise of gifts than did the Church of England, where ministry was severely hedged about by clericalism. In this sense Methodist ministry was much more charismatic than were Anglican forms of ministry.

Thus Methodism, at least during the life of Wesley, was a charismatic movement. Later, with the decline of the class meeting, the setting up of Methodist ministerial orders, and the general spiritual decline of the movement, Methodism largely ceased to be charismatic in the biblical sense.

The Holiness Movement

The American Holiness Movement grew up in large measure as a reaction to the spiritual decline within Methodism. Its history exhibits some parallels with contemporary Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity, although perhaps less than is true of original Methodism.

Whereas early Methodism grew up around the recovery of the doctrine of the new birth, the Holiness Movement sprang from a recovery of Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification as a deeper experience beyond conversion. In this sense, at least, the Holiness Movement has more affinities with modern Charismatic Christianity than does early Methodism.

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[39] There are also, of course, many other significant differences between the two movements. For one, the Charismatic Renewal has no one dominant personality who exercises anything like John Wesley's role in early Methodism. Another significant difference needing more scrutiny is that the Charismatic Renewal is not a movement among the poor masses as early Methodism was.

[40] Sermon, "The Ministerial Office," *Works*, 7:277.

[41] "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists," *Works*, 8:261.

Viewed from the perspective of this study, the Holiness Revival was indeed a charismatic movement. It emphasized grace, the Holy Spirit, and Christian fellowship, and felt keenly the tension between new life and old forms.

It seems to me that two things characterized the Holiness Movement which, on the one hand, made it less charismatic and, on the other, prepared the way for modern Pentecostalism. In both cases the Holiness Movement failed to carry over the breadth and genius of John Wesley.

1. The first of these was the lessened consciousness of Christian community and of the need for structures for community. We have seen how the class meeting was woven into Wesley's understanding of Christian life and sanctification. It was not for nothing that Wesleyans continued to be called Methodists!

By and large, however, the Holiness Movement failed to perpetuate the intimate, consistent, intense experience of Christian community in the form of the class meeting which so characterized earlier Methodism. In its place was substituted the holiness camp meeting. To some degree the camp meeting became to the Holiness Movement what the class meeting was to Methodism. But by its very p. 190 nature, the camp meeting could not bear the load. Whatever their value, occasional mass rallies cannot do the job of consistent, week-by-week, committed cells of seekers after holiness. It could be argued, in fact, that the camp meeting phenomenon tended to shift the perception of the work of holiness from that of a day-by-day walk with strong ethical implications toward that of an inner emotional crisis experience with periodic renewals—the typical "revival mentality."

This is not to say class meetings died out abruptly, or that this was a wholesale shift. I am speaking rather of what seems to have been a tendency. Class meetings continued in places well into the twentieth century, and the Holiness Movement exhibited other forms of small groups, such as Phoebe Palmer's "Tuesday Meetings." But it is clear that during the last half of the nineteenth century the class meeting was in decline while the camp meeting was in ascendancy. This is a question, however, deserving of further study; I offer it as an hypothesis.[42] Some support for this hypothesis is given by Charles W. Ferguson, who observes in *Organizing to Beat the Devil: Methodists and the Making of America:*

> At first the Methodists [in the U.S.] struck a balance between the camp meetings and the class meetings. In this combination the mini and the mass joined. But when camp assemblies became a sustaining feature in Methodist practice, group meetings subsided and fell gradually into disuse. Many undetermined factors may have entered into the change, but the fact is that the growth of mass efforts during the years before 1805 and 1844 coincided with a shrinking of group activities. Methodism moved toward the mass rather than the group as the primary form in society.[43]

In any case, it appears that the Holiness Movement was less specifically communitary than was earlier Methodism. One consequence of this was that it gave less opportunity for the practical exercise of spiritual gifts.

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[42] On the decline of the class meeting, see especially Samuel Emerick, ed., *Spiritual Renewal for Methodism: A Discussion of the Early Methodist Class Meeting and the Values Inherent in Personal Groups Today* (Nashville: Methodist Evangelistic Materials, 1958), particularly the chapters by Mary Alice Tenney, Robert Chiles and J. A. Leatherman; and Luke L. Keefer, Jr., "The Class Meeting's Role of Discipline in Methodism" (unpublished manuscript, 1974).

[43] Charles W. Ferguson, *Organizing to Beat the Devil: Methodists and the Making of America* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1971), p.149.

2. The second development in the Holiness Movement was a narrowing of John Wesley's conception of Christian perfection. A careful reading of Wesley's sermons has convinced me that the fundamental strain in Wesley's doctrine of sanctification is that of process: p. 191 Growing up into the fullness of Christ; attaining the mind of Christ and the image of God; loving God with all one's soul, strength, and mind. To this Wesley added, on the basis of experience and seemingly by analogy with his understanding of the new birth, his doctrine of a second crisis experience in which the believer was entirely sanctified, cleansed, and empowered to love God and others fully, without hindrance from an impure "heart," as God intends.

The Holiness Movement in the nineteenth century narrowed this focus by placing primary stress on the second crisis and comparatively less stress on the process of growth in sanctification beginning with conversion and extending throughout life. Holiness came to be conceived of primarily as a state. Thus Seth Cook Rees could write in 1897, "Holiness is a state; entire sanctification is an experience; the Holy Ghost is a person. We come into the state of holiness through the experience of entire sanctification, wrought by the omnipotent energies of the Holy Ghost."[44] Admittedly this "state" was a state of growth, but the accent had shifted.

Concomitant with this shift in emphasis was, as several others have shown, a shift toward pneumatological language and an emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

My hypothesis is that these two developments—combining with other trends and currents in late-nineteenth-century society—tended to produce an un-Wesleyan pessimism concerning normative personal and corporate Christian experience and an increasingly subjective focus on the crisis points in one's spiritual life. What for Wesley was a life-long growth in grace enabled by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and particularly by the second crisis of entire sanctification tended to become a series of peak experiences which were seen as carrying the believer through the low points in between. The absence of a consistent normative structure for continued growth in sanctification (such as the class meeting) reinforced this psychology. This tended finally toward a somewhat pessimistic view because it diminished the emphasis on a life of continuing perfecting and understood the primary dimension of perfection possible in this life as being bestowed at one crisis moment subsequent to regeneration.

If this generalization is somewhat oversimplified, I believe it at least contains an important element of truth. And it indicates that at this point the Holiness Movement was less biblically charismatic than early Methodism and was moving more toward modern Pentecostalism. p. 192 In Wesley's view, the Christian is always growing in sanctification. The second crisis is important, but more as a means than as a goal. In contrast, the Holiness Movement increasingly tended to see the second crisis as the goal of Christian experience, the end to which all prior growth in grace tended.[45]

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[44] Seth C. Rees, *The Ideal Pentecostal Church* (Cincinnati: M. W. Knapp, The Revivalist Office, 1897), p. 13.

[45] Some significant work on this tendency has recently been done by several Wesleyan scholars. Note especially Donald W. Dayton, "From Christian Perfection to the 'Baptism of the Holy Ghost' " and Melvin E. Dieter, "Wesleyan-Holiness Aspects of Pentecostal Origins," both in Vinson Synan, ed., *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins* (Plainfield, N.J.: Logos International, 1975), pp.39–54 and 55–80. Dieter notes that Phoebe Palmer's doctrine of entire sanctification, compared with Wesley's, "greatly enhanced the distinctiveness of the second blessing from that of the initial experience of regeneration." The result of such tendencies, says Dieter, "was that the American holiness revival came

From this perspective, late-nineteenth-century Holiness theology logically leads either to Pentecostalism or to a denial of the validity of a second crisis experience. By its very nature, a spiritual peak experience cannot be permanently satisfying. If that experience was a genuine experience of the Holy Spirit in His fullness (which I do not question), we would expect, of course, that the daily presence of the Spirit in the believer's life would be fully satisfying—and of course that was the expectation. But without normative structures for nurturing the life of holiness, and with the increasing emphasis on subjective crises typified by the growing use of Pentecostal crisis language,[46] one can imagine that many common Holiness people sensed an inner lack in their lives, a sense that there must be something deeper, something more, in Christian experience. So then after 1900 the question logically became, could this "something more" be the new phenomenon of speaking in tongues? And on that issue the Holiness Movement divided.[47]

If this line of reasoning is valid, it leads to two conclusions:

1. The fully Wesleyan understanding of Christian perfection as combining both process and crisis must be recovered. Perhaps the real question before us is less that of the appropriateness of Spirit-baptism language than the question of how we in fact teach, encourage, and make structural provision for the life of "all inward and outward holiness." There is a biblical and practical breadth to the Wesleyan understanding of Christian experience that must be recovered p. 193 in our day.

2. In this light, modern Pentecostalism may be viewed in both a positive and a negative way. Positively, Pentecostalism has recovered and magnified much of the spiritual dynamism of the older Holiness Movement and has been responsible, under God, for millions of people on all continents coming to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Whether we like it or not, in some sense the mantle of the Holiness Movement as a spiritual revitalizing force has passed to Pentecostalism, which has had a much greater impact than has our own tradition in our day. Furthermore, Pentecostalism has raised the question of the *charismata* and the charismatic nature of Christianity in a way that has forced the Church at large to re-examine what the Scriptures say on this subject. The new consciousness of the practical dimensions of the *charismata* which is growing throughout the Church is directly traceable to modern Pentecostalism (and, of course, indirectly to Wesleyanism).

Negatively, Pentecostalism, and to some degree the Charismatic Movement, have not yet recovered the ethical, spiritual, and social depth and breadth of early Methodism. The sanctifying emphasis has not been sufficiently retained. An over-emphasis on the more dramatic gifts has been accompanied by a lack of a positive balancing emphasis on the fruit of the Spirit and the social impact of the Gospel.

It is completely understandable that the Holiness Movement should react as it did to the outbreak of Pentecostalism. Holiness advocates by and large denounced the gift of tongues with the same intensity that Pentecostals promoted it. And the more tongues became the focal point of Pentecostalism, the more it became the focal point of Holiness opposition. Thus it nearly always is at the outbreak of a new movement. The unfortunate

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to emphasize crisis stages of salvation at the expense of an emphasis on growth in grace" (p.62).

[46] Note in Rees the use of such phrases as "Pentecostal fire," "Pentecostal electrocution," "dynamite," "jagged bolts of Pentecostal lightning," "condensed lightning from the upper skies," etc. (Rees, *passim*).

[47] Holiness losses to Pentecostalism seem to have been significant in the early years. See Dieter, "Wesleyan-Holiness Aspects of Pentecostal Origins," p.75.

thing is that in such a circumstance the old movement is left without the dynamic of the new and the new is left without the stability and balance of the old.

We are now in a new period, however. The Pentecostal and Charismatic movements are here to stay, and indeed in some sectors are showing signs of institutionalism and accommodation. Conversely, Holiness bodies are gradually softening their opposition to Pentecostal and Charismatic themes and are beginning to take a second look. It is time to build bridges of understanding and to ask how the Holy Spirit mght be pleased to build in this day a truly, biblically charismatic and holy Church.

III. WESLEYANS AND CHARISMATICS TODAY

Three major considerations should be part of the agenda for P. 194 Wesleyan theology today as it confronts and interacts with Charismatic Christianity.

1. *We should re-evaluate our arguments in opposition to Pentecostalism in general and the gifts of the Spirit in particular*.

Most Wesleyan commentators, conscious of history and of the similarity at certain points of Wesleyan and Pentecostal theology, have understandably approached the question of spiritual gifts from a defensive and apologetic, rather than positive and constructive, perspective. Our primary concern has been to explain why we differ from Pentecostals and to defend our ranks from outbreaks of tongues-speaking. Most of the Wesleyan-Holiness literature on gifts has therefore been of this negative and defensive variety.[48]

More recently, some Wesleyans have begun to approach the question of gifts in a broader and more constructive way, asking how a proper biblical understanding can make us more effective in our work and witness. Two books with similar titles exemplify these two approaches within Wesleyan-Holiness ranks: W. T. Purkiser's *The Gifts of the Spirit*, and Kenneth C. Kinghorn's *Gifts of the Spirit*.[49] We might well heed Dr. Kinghorn's admonition to avoid both "charismania" and "charisphobia" in dealing with the gifts.

Most Holiness writing on the gifts so far has zeroed in on the tongues question, focusing particularly on the Corinthian problem. The general line of reasoning has been

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[48] See, for example, Harvey J. S. Blaney, "St. Paul's Posture on Speaking in Unknown Tongues," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 8 (Spring 1973) 52–60; Charles D. Isbell, "Glossolalia and Propheteialalia: A Study in 1 Corinthians 14," *WTJ*, 10 (Spring 1975): 15–22; Charles W. Carter, "A Wesleyan View of the Spirit's Gift of Tongues in the Book of Acts," *WTJ*, 4 (Spring 1969): 39–68; Carter, *The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit: A Wesleyan Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974, 1977), especially pp.181–220; Carter, introduction and notes on 1 Corinthians in Charles W. Carter, ed., *The Wesleyan Bible Commentary*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), especially 5:114–16, 197–208, 214–23; Lloyd H. Knox, *Key Biblical Perspectives on Tongues* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Light and Life Press, 1974); Wesley L. Duewel, *The Holy Spirit and Tongues* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Light and Life Press, 1974). Most of these employ similar arguments, although the contrasting treatment of just what Paul means by "tongues" in 1 Corinthians 14 reveals the difficulty of basing a total prohibition of glossolalia on the New Testament material.

Not all Wesleyan literature has been of this kind, however. Note especially Wilson T. Hogue, *The Holy Spirit: A Study* (Chicago: William B. Rose, 1916), especially pp.321–60.

[49] Kenneth Cain Kinghorn, *Gifts of the Spirit* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976).

similar to that described by Charles Hummel in his recent book, *Fire in the Fireplace*: p. 195

> Most commentaries paint a picture of [speaking in tongues] along the following lines: at Corinth it was an emotional, sensational experience similar to the ecstasy of the pagan religions. The Christians had an exaggerated respect for this gift which they considered of the highest value. Misuse of tongues was the greatest problem in the church. Paul considers it of least value since it appears last on some of his lists. At best he begrudgingly commands that it not be forbidden.[50]

As Hummel notes, there are several logical and hermeneutical problems with this approach. He comments,

> Paul's statements do not support these conjectures. Significantly, these opinions come from a culture for which speaking in tongues is both intellectually and socially unacceptable. Since in every generation Christianity is influenced by its environment, is it not possible that this spiritual gift is far more a problem for the modern church than it was for the Corinthians? The first eleven chapters of 1 Corinthians indicate that for Paul other issues were of much greater concern.[51]

Strictly from the standpoint of logic, some of the most common arguments against glossolalia must be called into question. This does not mean, of course, that glossolalia should be promoted or unrestrictedly permitted, that every outbreak of "tongues" is legitimate or authentic, or that there are no valid arguments against the practice. But it does suggest some need for re-evaluation on the part of Wesleyans.

For example, a sharp distinction is often made between tongues as the miraculous speaking of a known, but unlearned, language and *glossolalia* as "unknown tongue" or ecstatic speech. But this distinction is not so obvious as it seems. In the first place, the New Testament does not make or support this distinction, although it is clear that known languages were involved at least on the Day of Pentecost.[52] p. 196 Secondly, the idea that non-language tongues-speaking is a highly emotional, irrational, ecstatic form of behaviour involving "mindless utterances"[53] or being "out of control"[54] is a caricature that most Charismatics would reject. Thirdly, it is not clear that it makes any practical psychological or spiritual difference to the tongues-speaker whether he or she is uttering a "known" or "unknown" tongue if in any case the tongue is unknown *to the speaker*. In either case it is to him or her an "unknown tongue" which is in some sense unintelligible.

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[50] Charles E. Hummel, *Fire in the Fireplace: Contemporary Charismatic Renewal* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1978), p.203.

[51] Ibid.

[52] While different kinds or varieties of tongues-speaking do seem to be reported in the New Testament, no biblical writer makes the language/non-language distinction so common today, at least not as a way of validating the one and condemning the other. The issue in 1 Corinthians 14 is not what is spoken but when it is spoken and whether the congregation is edified through interpretation. In Acts 2 we know for sure that a variety of known languages was spoken; we *do not* know for sure that "unknown tongues" were not also manifested. Apparently that was not an important question to Luke.

[53] Knox, p.18.

[54] Blaney, p.55.

Another problem of logic involves inconsistency between the arguments made against tongues. One writer, for instance, considers tongues (other than known languages) as illegitimate because it involves yielding one's rational control to an irrational, overpowering, ecstatic speech pattern, while another author argues that tongues can't be legitimate because the tongues-speaker can speak in tongues deliberately, at will, whereas a truly valid spiritual gift comes by direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit.[55] One argues that tongues is wrong because it is irrational; the other that it is false because it is rationally controllable. The truth, however, would appear to be that tongues-speaking may sometimes be a non-rational but not necessarily irrational speech pattern which lies within the range of normal and rational human behavior. Such tongues-speaking may or may not be prompted or inspired by the Holy Spirit, and in some contexts may be induced by other forces, whether psychological, social, or demonic. This is no more than what we would admit for some other rather extraordinary forms of behavior which in certain contexts we do not consider abnormal or pathological, including crying, screaming, shouting, or dancing.

Probably the major argument against glossolalia in Holiness circles has been that it is an irrational form of behavior and speech, while p. 197 the gospel always calls us to rational behavior and speech.[56] But this argument also needs re-evaluation, on at least two counts. First, it operates on the basis of an unnecessary rational/irrational dichotomy or polarity. What is not totally rational to us may not be irrational; it may simply be non-rational (in the sense that emotions in general, for instance, are non-rational but not by definition irrational), or it may be beyond our present level of knowledge. Thus we now know Einstein's theory of relativity is not irrational, although it appeared to be so at first. In this sense, tongues-speaking when accompanied by other signs of the work of the Spirit (notably the fruit of the Spirit) may have its own reason and rationality that we have yet been unable to fully discern.[57]

The second problem with this argument is its assumption that modern glossolalia is an overwhelming, highly emotion-packed ecstatic experience verging on frenzy and analogous to such phenomena in pagan religions. But this is a caricature of tongues-speaking as found in the Charismatic Movement today. As Hummel notes,

> Since some pagan religions have a glossolalia involving frenzy and trance, it is often assumed that the Christian experience is similar. These religions also have ordinary prayer, meditation and sacrifice, but their meaning is hardly determinative for the Christian expression. On the contrary, the Corinthians were not possessed by evil spirits but were led by the Holy Spirit. In fact Paul assumed that they could control their speaking in tongues (14:28).

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[55] Knox, pp.16ff.; Duewel, p.21.

[56] Timothy Smith sees this as the most foundational argument against tongues, as do many others. Timothy L. Smith, *Speaking the Truth in Love: Some Honest Questions for Pentecostals* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1977), pp.42–47. It is not helpful to cite Wesley here, because he never faced the modern question of glossolalia.

[57] Hummel tentatively suggests four possible purposes for tongues-speaking, pp.203–04. See also Kelsey, *Tongue Speaking*, pp.218–33.

> The Corinthians may have exercised this gift with strong emotion, just as they may have prayed, prophesied or sung emotionally. But this style of expression is not inherent in the gift.[58]

The real danger in this approach to tongues, however, is that it may lead us to the hyper-rationalism characteristic of dead orthodoxy. Wesleyans, of all people, should be open to the working of God in human experience and reticent to state in advance how the Spirit shall or shall not operate. We should maintain the balance of reason, experience, and Scripture found in John Wesley.

We may justly criticize many Pentecostals (not all) for making tongues the evidence of the fullness of the Spirit or for attempting to p. 198 induce people to seek or experience this gift. But we should be careful that our arguments grow inductively from Scripture and stand the test of the rational logic for which we contend.[59] This has unquestionably been

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[58] Hummel, p.135.

[59] Frank Carver notes that "apart from those who have a pro- or con- tongues axe to grind for ecclesiastical reasons the tongues in 1 Corinthians 14 is normally judged" by New Testament scholarship "to be some form of ecstatic utterance" (Carver, p.13).

The most difficult passages for a rigid anti-tongues position, as some Wesleyan writers have noted, are three of Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians 14—"I would like every one of you to speak in tongues" (v.5), "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you" (v.18), and "Do not forbid speaking in tongues" (v.39).

Some Wesleyan and other writers have gone to great lengths (including suggestions that Paul is employing a psychologically very subtle pastoral approach here) in attempting to establish that these statements do not mean what they seem to say. It appears to me, however, that a sound hermeneutic demands that we take these statements and the whole chapter in as straight-forward and "face value" a manner as possible. Such an approach would have to note several things:

1) There is no sound exegetical basis in this chapter for giving "tongues" two different meanings in Paul's use here or for restricting "tongues" to "known languages." Whatever Paul means when he speaks of Corinthian tongues-speaking, he means the same thing when he speaks of his own experience.

2) Paul's affirmation that "I speak in tongues more than all of you" cannot, by the text or context, be required to mean "I speak in more languages than all of you." In the first place, in the following verse he contrasts his own tongues-speaking with "intelligible words," which would seem to mean that he in fact knew something about speaking in non-intelligible words. Secondly, the context here is the *gift* of tongues, not the acquired ability to speak languages. So even if "tongues" in verse 18 means "languages," the interpretation would have to be, "I thank God that I miraculously speak in languages I never learned more than all of you." But there is no more biblical support for the idea that paul in fact frequently employed Spirit-inspired unlearned known languages in his ministry, than there is that he spoke in "unknown tongues," so the question must be left open.

3) Paul's statement, "I would like every one of you to speak in tongues," cannot with consistency be understood as an encouragement to speak in various known languages unless verse 2 be understood as saying "anyone who speaks in a known language speaks only to God"—which makes little sense.

4) Similarly, in the context of the whole chapter, verse 39 means literally what it says—do not forbid tongues-speaking. Whatever tongues-speaking was going on in Corinth, Paul says: Do not forbid it (or possibly, "Stop forbidding it,"—Hummel, p.158).

the intent throughout the modern Wesleyan polemic against tongues. My question, however, is whether our arguments have been totally sound.

I realize that to suggest even the degree of openness to Pentecostalism called for here will be considered by some as an encouragement to tongues-speaking. It should be clear that this is not my intent. My concern is, rather, that we would sufficiently moderate our position so that we could be more open toward and work more closely with our many Christian sisters and brothers in the Charismatic Movement and appreciate the work God is doing through them. They can learn from us, and we can learn from them.

2. *We should understand what the Charismatic Movement is today*. Many of our conceptions simply do not stand up to the facts. For example, the movement is much more diverse than we have painted it. We find not only the obvious distinction between the older pentecostalism and the newer Charismatic Movement but also widespread p. 199 varieties and differences within each of these. The more recent Charismatic Movement may be divided generally into the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, the Charismatic Movement within the mainline denominations, the somewhat nebulous group associated with The 700 Club and The PTL Club, old-line Pentecostalists who have "made the switch" to the new Charismatic style, and the rather close-knit group associated with Bob Mumford, Charles Simpson, and others. Also, there are now fairly well-organized Charismatic Renewal movements in some smaller, more-or-less evangelical denominations, such as the Mennonite Charismatic Renewal.[60]

These groups vary widely in their understanding of the precise role of tongues-speaking in Christian experience and in the Church, although they all practice tongues-speaking. Many do not hold that tongues is a necessary evidence of being filled with the Spirit. Also, one may make the generalization that in Charismatic groups that now have a decade or more of experience, tongues is not the main p. 200 concern or issue. Many

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Control it according to the teaching of this chapter, yes; but do not forbid. That is the "bottom line" teaching of the whole chapter.

In addition, one should note the positive things Paul clearly *does* say about the very tongues-speaking occurring at Corinth: The person who speaks in tongues speaks to God (v.2). "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself" (v.4—and there is no suggestion that it is wrong for a believer personally to be edified in this way). Tongues-speaking, if interpreted, is just as important and edifying as prophecy (v.5). Speaking in tongues is of help to a congregation if it is accompanied by "some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction" (v.6). The one speaking in tongues "utters mysteries with his spirit" or "by the Spirit" (v.2; no criticism implied *per se*, but only as this relates to public worship). And, finally, when one speaks in tongues, his or her spirit is praying (v.14). Again, no criticism seems to be implied.

1 Corinthians 14 was Paul's (and the Spirit's) perfect opportunity to put a once-for-all prohibition on glossolalia. But Paul did not take advantage of the opportunity. Clearly, he saw the dangers of a total prohibition and was satisfied merely to state some general restrictions in the interest of good order in public worship.

Note well that these comments are not made in any sense an encouragement to tongues-speaking, but only in the interest of an interpretation of Scripture that is logically sound and hermeneutically faithful and out of a concern that we may unintentionally limit the work of the Spirit in our midst. The most balanced policy seems to be the same as that of Wesley and of mid-nineteenth century Holiness leaders toward strong emotional manifestations: Do not encourage; do not forbid; judge by the fruit.

[60] There have also been attempts to initiate a Wesleyan Charismatic fellowship. A small conference was held for this purpose in Cincinnati in January 1979.

charismatic groups are now primarily concerned with questions of Christian community building, discipling, authority, family life, and personal spiritual growth. In other words, there is a growing concern with ethical questions. One need not agree with Pentecostal and Charismatic interpretations of tongues (as I do not) in order to appreciate the diversity and spiritual vitality in much of the movement.

Nowhere do common stereotypes of the Charismatic Movement become more inappropriate than when one examines the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Here is a movement which is very conscious of historic Christian roots and of the call to a life of holiness. A review of several issues of *New Covenant* magazine (or of the more recent publication, *Pastoral Renewal*) will reveal the blending of evangelical and catholic emphases which are especially characteristic of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. As noted earlier, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal has many parallels with eighteenth-century Methodism (as well as many differences), and there is no reason why contemporary Wesleyans should not have frequent and close fellowship with this branch of the Body of Christ.[61]

3. *Finally, we should seek a more biblically charismatic expression of the Church*.

I have already indicated the general direction which this concern should take us. We must seek to be charismatic in the fully biblical sense. Among other things, this means:

1) A new awareness of the possibilities and potential of God's grace in human experience, the Church, and in society.

2) A rediscovery of the charismatic nature and structure of the Church. This means a balanced emphasis on gifts, but it also means understanding that the *charismata* provide a foundational insight for understanding the varieties of ministry within the Church. We need to combine an emphasis on gifts with a reaffirmation of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.

3) Related to this is a recovery of the understanding and experience of the Church as community. We need to see and experience the Church primarily as a charismatic organism, rather than as an institutional organization. This means recovering some functional equivalent of the class meeting, but it also means a much deeper understanding of the nature of New Testament *koinonia*.

4) A fully charismatic expression of the Church will understand p. 201 itself as a proto-community of the Kingdom of God and seek by God's grace to be a messianic expression of the Kingdom in a world of contrary values.

5) A charismatic expression of the Church must in no way compromise the call to sanctity and holiness. Rather, it will see holiness as encompassing the corporate, as well as individual, experience of believers, and it will see the Christian community as the essential environment for making progress in the life of holiness.

6) Conscious that the life and witness of the Church stem from the work of the Holy Spirit, a biblically charismatic expression of the Church will seek to manifest the "catholic spirit" which John Wesley advocated. It will seek visible expression of the unity of the Church through basing that unity on an openness and sensitivity toward the working of the Holy Spirit in the various branches of the Church.

CONCLUSION

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[61] It is worth noting that a Colloquy on the Loss and Recovery of the Sacred, sponsored by the evangelically-Methodist-oriented Fund for Theological Education November 5–9, 1979, at the University of Notre Dame, included a range of both Wesleyan and Charismatic scholars, among others.

Contemporary Wesleyans may be uniquely placed to be used for a new and dynamic articulation of the gospel message in our day. We have in our tradition the best of the catholic, evangelical, and charismatic emphasis.

Jeremy Rifkin, in his new book *The Emerging Order*, argues:

> If the Charismatic and evangelical strains of the new Christian renewal movement [today] come together and unite a liberating energy with a new covenant vision for society, it is possible that a great religious awakening will take place, one potentially powerful enough to incite a second Protestant reformation.
>
> It is also possible that as the domestic and global situation continues to worsen in the 1980s, the evangelical/Charismatic phenomena, and the waves of religious renewal that follow, could, instead, provide a growing sanctuary for millions of frightened Americans and even a recruiting ground for a repressive movement manifesting all of the earmarks of an emerging fascism.[62]

Wesleyanism already, to some degree, bridges the Evangelical and Charismatic camps today. It has a clear message of present deliverance from inbred sin by the power of the sanctifying Spirit. If it needs anything it is a new infusion of an openness to the power of the Holy Spirit and a new appreciation for the breadth and balance of its own heritage as seen in John Wesley himself.

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Icons as Christian Art

Robert M. Yule

Reprinted from Poyema: The Christian Task in the Arts

Icons (Greek eikōn*—image) have traditionally been used in private and public worship by members of the Orthodox family of Churches as channels of divine blessing and healing. Icons usually take the form of flat images of Christ, the Virgin Mary or Saints painted on wood and are often ornately decorated. Icons featured prominently in the iconoclastic controversy 717–843 between church and state on the use of paintings, mosaics and statues in the Church, ending with the state withdrawing its support for the iconoclasts or image-breakers. The author of this article offers an evangelical reflection on the theology or icons in the context of today's humanistic art.*
(Editor)

In 1967, I heard the Rev. Doug Storkey, then minister of Knox Church, Dunedin, speak about an overseas tour he had just completed. I remember his description of seeing Michelangelo's sculpture of David, in the Accademia in Florence. He was overwhelmed by

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[62] Jeremy Rifkin, *The Emerging Order: God in the Age of Scarcity* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1979), p.xi.