

Unionism: Cause and Effect of the Charismatic Renewal within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

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Preface

Judging from the correspondence I've received from WELS sources during the last few months, I believe it's safe to say that there lurks within the hearts of most Wisconsin Synod pastors a grave fear of the current phenomenon known as the "Charismatic Renewal." Statements such as, "I'm happy to report that the devil has caused no confusion among our congregations ..." show that our pastors aren't eagerly awaiting the day when one of their parishioners happily announces his baptism with the Holy Spirit and subsequent manifestation of tongues speaking. Their dread is not unfounded. Whether one is sympathetic to the movement or dead set against it, the fact remains that many (not all) churches have undergone disruption and irreparable schism. As the Renewal grows (and who can now label it a "passing fad"?), WELS pastors will undoubtedly also encounter problems – in fact they already have, minimally. My interest grew partly from this realization, that someday I too would probably be facing the music of glossolalia.

Then, too, my interest stems from my latter years of grade school, when I transferred from a LCMS school to a Pentecostal-type school. Having grown up in a predominantly Lutheran day school environment, the crass emotionalism in their worship was strange and upsetting to me. I was required to attend worship sessions, but not to participate, if I so desired. The problem was, though, that it wasn't always so easy to decline participation. With a church full of weeping people, it's difficult to sit emotionless, especially for a boy going through that stage of life. The experience left me with a bad taste in my mouth for that brand of experiential religion. So I chose the broad topic of the Charismatic Renewal with the idea of facing the issue now, so that when confronted later, the only bias involved would be scriptural, and not personal. The reader may judge whether I've accomplished my goal of objectivity, fallen short of it, or maybe even gone too far in the other direction, i.e. a sympathetic bias.

In narrowing my topic, I wanted to find the point at which the Charismatic Renewal reached its closest proximity to our Synod. Outside of the Renewal's inroads into the WELS (a possible thesis a dozen years from now), that point is, of course, where the Renewal claims healthy support within our former sister synod, the Luther Church – Missouri Synod. My thesis then, is simply the account of my journey into the LCMS Charismatic Renewal, together with considerations and implications drawn.

Introduction

All at once, a voice seemed to come from nowhere and everywhere. It was clear and deep and distinct, neither thunder nor whisper. “The gift is already yours. Reach out and take it.” I couldn’t breathe, let alone move. Obediently, my eyes shut tight. I stretched out my hands toward the altar, palms up. At the same time, I opened my mouth ... In an instant, there was a sudden shift of dimensions and God became real. A spirit of pure love pervaded the church and drenched me like rain. I felt forgiven and cleansed. A life-time load of guilt had evaporated like fog in the morning sun. Then I noticed that I was praying in a new language of praise.¹

This quote wasn’t recorded from the testimony of a “Marjoe-type” revivalist underneath the sprawl of a huge canvas tent.

God visited us with such a heavenly presence that people wept all over the room. One man saw a vision of Jesus. Others received the Holy Spirit. And some present said the singing sounded as if angels had joined us!²

Nor is this the account of how the congregation reacted to his powerful testimony. The author of the former quote is a graduate of Concordia Lutheran Seminary. His name can be found on the clergy roster of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The latter (written by a former LCMS clergyman) recounts the activities of a large, interdenominational group which met on the campus of Concordia Lutheran Seminary for a charismatic prayer meeting. Although the group had no official Synodical sanction, the seminary’s resources were made available for the participants.

By now it can’t be denied that the Charismatic Renewal is alive, well, and kicking around in the LCMS. The conference mentioned above occurred in *May, 1969*. Since then the movement has grown phenomenally within Lutheranism as a whole, and particularly within the LCMS. The “new-Pentecostalism” infiltrated the ranks of Lutheranism during the early years of the last decade. No statistics are available to accurately indicate lay involvement,³ but research carried out by Lutheran Charisciples reported in January, 1976,

On the basis of presently known information and research, it is projected that between 1,500 and 1,800 Lutheran pastors in North America have experienced or are seeking the charismatic baptism-with-the- Holy-Spirit.” This number represents about 10% of all the Lutheran clergy in the USA and Canada.

The major denominational clergy count was broken down thus: LCA – 202 pastors; ALC – 385; LCMS – 450. Of the 450 clergy-men associated with the LCMS, 393 are pastors within the institutional church, 57 (12%) are men now “outside,”⁴ i.e. men who have resigned or have been suspended.

These figures, exaggerated though they may be, show an astounding rate of growth. Why? What could be the root cause of so many within the LCMS seeking something *more* than

¹ Erwin Prange, *The Gift Is Already Yours*. Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1973.

² Rodney Lensch, *My Personal Pentecost*. Kirkwood, Missouri: Impact Books, 1972, p. 3.

³ One Lutheran charismatic leader estimates that “A million or more fellow Lutherans in the United States” have been affected by the Renewal (*The Charismatic Renewal Among Lutherans*, p. 14).

⁴ Hans Schnabel, ed. *Lutheran Charisciples – Nurture and News*. Vol. V, No. 1, January 1976.

the evangelical preaching of Christ-crucified in a doctrinally pure context, which had been the hallmark of LCMS theology for so long? By this I don't wish to imply a blanket condemnation of the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal—it is not the purpose of this thesis to deliver a tongue thrashing of the movement as a whole (in fact, the reader may find the opposite to be true). Granted, there may be many reasons for Missouri's present involvement, but it is the current conviction of this writer that the *principal* cause for our former sister-synod's flirtations with the Charismatic Renewal can be found in her unionistic worship practices as of late. I believe it to be no coincidence that when scriptural fellowship principles really started to crumble throughout LCMS circles, the Charismatic Renewal started to mushroom, seemingly almost proportionately.

On the other hand, it is also the current conviction of this writer that the principal *effect* of the Renewal among LCMS churches, clergy, professors and officials, will be a *further* breakdown of scriptural principles of fellowship. Again, let no one overstate me to say that no good can come from the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal. The movement has an important message for all of Lutheranism, WELS included. But the flagrant unionism which is espoused by Lutheran Charismatics thus far must be condemned as the doctrinal aberration it is, no matter how effectively one may reconcile the rest of the charismatic system to confessionally Lutheran and scriptural standards.

Therefore, the purpose of my thesis is to answer the following questions concerning the relationship between the Charismatic Renewal and the LCMS: How did it enter the Synod? and, How will it effect the Synod? To state my purpose in another form, I will prove on the basis of my research, the following abstract:

Unionism is both the cause and the effect of the Charismatic Renewal within the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

2. Clearing up some Misconceptions

My Dilemma

To most Lutherans, the word “charismatic” is synonymous with “Pentecostal.” While generally speaking such an impression is probably correct, at the same time it’s a misunderstanding to lump *all* Charismatics into the same category as classical Pentecostals, which is something most opponents of the Renewal are fond of doing. While all Pentecostals would consider themselves charismatic, not all Charismatics would consider themselves pentecostal. The reason for this is that the Charismatic Renewal, unlike Pentecostal churches which adhere to official statements of faith, is in every sense a “movement,” beginning at the grass roots level and pervading the majority of structured church bodies. Consequently, pinning down a definitive system of theology for the Renewal is like trying to catch the “elusive butterfly,” since the movement’s leaders within the mainline denominations all wish to flavor the Renewal with their own brand of doctrine. Sometimes even within a denomination there are doctrinal differences of opinion among charismatic figureheads. Obviously, my dilemma was how to give the necessary background information on the theological stance of the *Lutheran Charismatic Renewal*, which would be both representative and at the same time show some degree of uniformity.

Fortunately for me, the Renewal among Lutherans has by now organized to present a fairly united front before the face of the organized church. Due to the concern and industry of a handful of Lutheran charismatic leaders, the “Lutheran Charismatic Renewal services was formed as a non-profit corporation in 1974, as a vehicle to serve and coordinate the various aspects of the charismatic renewal among Lutherans.”⁵ One can hardly overestimate the assets and potential returns gained for the Renewal from this corporate venture. For the main, major charismatic figures of authority within Lutheranism are now like-minded in doctrine and purpose. It is from these sources that the theological background below drawn will be drawn.

Lutheran Charismatics’ Dilemma

If Lutheran charismatics wish to make their experience palatable to the rest of Lutheranism, which they do, then an enormous task lies before them. They must shake off the stigma of experience-centered theology associated with classical Pentecostalism. This is especially true within the LCMS where, on the whole, doctrinal concerns play a much more vital role than in the other two major synods, and where oppositional fervor runs high. Charismatics who wish to remain in the LCMS (the majority do) and yet give up their “guilt by association” must reconcile their charismatic experience to scriptural, confessional, and synodical standards of doctrine. The leaders of the movement within Lutheranism have labored long and hard to do just that. In many ways they have succeeded and have issued strong confessional statements in defense of their position; in some ways they have failed, most notably in their decayed fellowship principles. The following are theological questions raised by Lutheran orthodoxy and effectively answered by leading Lutheran charismatics.

⁵ *Lutheran Charismatic Renewal Newsletter*. Vol. 2, No. 9, September 1976, p. 3. This issue also outlines the threefold function of Lutheran Charismatic Renewal Services and lists the members of the Service Committee.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit

Quite often the vocabulary and worship practices of Lutheran charismatics become a source of misunderstanding and contention, since their resemblance to classical, Pentecostalism is unmistakable. As far as the worship practices are concerned, they may *not* be condemned merely because they differ from the more staid, traditionally Lutheran worship forms. Lifting up of hands, shouting with joy, clapping and the ever present “Praise the Lord!” all remain the adiaphora they are, except in cases of genuine offense. But the *terminology* of the Renewal must be defined clearly enough so that every vestige of Pentecostal doctrinal aberrations be rejected. Therefore, Lutherans who are concerned about avoiding syncretistic doctrine and practice, justifiably ask the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal the fundamental question, “What is the ‘Baptism with the Holy Spirit’?”

One opponent of the movement who is a LCMS pastor, arrogates to himself the prerogative of answering:

The baptism in the Holy Spirit (is) an experience distinct from and usually subsequent to repentance, faith, and water baptism. In that baptism a person receives the totality of the Spirit into his life and is thereby fully empowered for witness and service ... this Spirit-baptism is an experience distinct from the reception of the Spirit at the time one comes to faith.⁶

While this description may comply with the teachings of Classical Pentecostalism, it falls far short of the way Lutheran charismatic theologians view the matter. The Lutheran charismatic authorities indeed seem as much (if not more) concerned about the Pentecostal characteristic of belittling baptismal grace as anyone else. Dr. Ted Jungkuntz of Valparaiso University, who describes himself as “a ‘card-carrying member in good standing’ of both the Charismatic Movement and the LCMS” spelled out convictions he would not compromise when he was first encountering the Renewal. One of them was this:

Any experience designated “Baptism in the Spirit,” which called into question the bestowal of the Holy Spirit through sacramental baptism, even when administered to an infant, could not be harmonized with Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions and would be tantamount to selling one’s birthright for a mess of pottage.⁷

Then what is the “Baptism with the Holy Spirit” to Lutheran charismatics? Today, the best place to turn for answers about the Renewal is the book, *The Charismatic Renewal Among Lutherans*, by Larry Christenson, a pastor in the ALC, who has probably done more than anyone else to bring the logical respectability and organization to the movement. While not presenting a detailed system (neither does the Biblical witness spell out exactly the doctrine on baptism with the Holy Spirit), he explains the principles involved:

It is important to point out that neither in the Bible nor in present-day experience can baptism with the Spirit be properly understood as a second baptism. There is only one baptism (Eph 4:5). Baptism with the Holy Spirit is not separate from Christian baptism, but integrally united with it. What people are experiencing in

⁶ Rev. John F. Johnson, “The Charismatic Movement,” *Christian News*, January 3, 1977, p. 7.

⁷ Theodore R. Jungkuntz, “Charismatic Worship: Challenges or Challenged?” *Response*. Vol. 16, Nos. 1-2, 1976, p. 5.

the charismatic renewal ... is “a flowering or actualization of baptismal grace” ... a vitalization of one’s faith, which may express itself in a variety of ways.

Again and again, Pastor Christenson points out that Spirit-baptism is *not* an added endowment of the Spirit, as classical Pentecostalism sees it,⁸ but a releasing of the Spirit which has already been given. Lutheran theologian William Lazareth describes the charismatic experience as “a particularly dramatic form of sanctification,” marking a progression in one’s Christian life. Dr. Jungkuntz also views the Baptism with the Holy Spirit inseparably united with water baptism:

Every Christian is a charismatic in the sense that he has been baptized by water baptism, converted by the gospel; each one has been given gifts ... Implicitly, at water baptism, we all became charismatics – the rest of our life is a matter of what is *implicitly* becoming explicit. For some Christians, becoming explicit gets a particular impetus at one point in his life (Spirit-baptism), but that doesn’t mean it wasn’t there before.⁹

In effect, Lutheran charismatics look upon the Baptism with the Holy Spirit as a form of sanctification. But just as sanctification is to be *distinguished* but never *separated* from justification (i.e. a proper distinction of Law-Gospel), so also a similar process is necessary in respect to Spirit-baptism:

Thus, while the gift of the Holy Spirit is united with baptism, its manifestation may be distinct from baptism ... Faith, baptism, and the manifestation of the Spirit may presuppose one another they are distinct from one another.¹⁰

Dr. Jungkuntz emphasizes earnestly the importance of unity without confusion, distinction without separation:

A corollary of the separation as well as of the confusion of justification and sanctification is the separation as well as the confusion of sacramental baptism and pentecostal baptism.... The result of a *separation* is to make “witnessing with power” a basis for salvation, consequently subjecting salvation to the uncertainties attaching to man’s ability to manifest various gifts of the Spirit. On the other hand when confused, the result is to quench the desire for an ongoing manifestation of all the Spirit’s resources for making the Gospel witness effective in the hearts of men (Ac 1:4,8; 4:29-33; I Co 14:20-33, 39-40).¹¹

In this way of defining the Baptism with the Holy Ghost as simply “an actualization of baptismal grace” lies the key to harmonizing the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal with the Bible, the Lutheran Confessions, and LCMS theology. Luther writes how baptism is an event which initiates an ongoing work of the Spirit:

The sacrament of baptism is quickly over. But the spiritual baptism, the drowning of sin, which it signifies, lasts as long as we live.... Similarly the lifting up out of the baptismal water is quickly done, but the thing it signifies – the spiritual birth

⁸ See Frederick D. Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970. Pp. 167, 178, 190, 197.

⁹ Dr. Ted Jungkuntz, excerpt from a taped interview, Valparaiso, Indiana, March 5-6, 1977.

¹⁰ Larry Christenson, *The Charismatic Renewal Among Lutherans*. Minneapolis: Lutheran Charismatic Renewal Services, 1976. pp. 38, 43, 44, 47-50.

¹¹ Dr. Ted Jungkuntz, excerpt from a lecture presented at Concordia Seminary, “Lutheran Theology and the Charismatic Renewal.” May 12, 1975.

and the increase of grace and righteousness – even though it begins in baptism lasts until death, indeed, until the Last Day.¹²

I find this interpretation of “Baptism with the Holy Spirit” in complete accord with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions (e.g. SC, IV, 12, p. 551; LC, 65, p. 749). It seems to be a sound way of relating one’s Christian life more effectively to the miraculous gift of God’s grace in the sacramental covenant of water baptism, as Paul does in Romans 6:3-4: “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

More and more LCMS pastors are also coming to the conclusion that this interpretation of Spirit-baptism (really the cornerstone of the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal) is compatible with what they were believing all along. Indeed, John T. Mueller might be labeled “charismatic” when he wrote (before “power” became a dirty word):

We baptized Christians should daily, through the power given us in Holy Baptism, suppress our lusts and sins, and walk in holiness of life, doing that which is pleasing to God. That is what Holy Baptism signifies, and for that Holy Baptism also gives us the necessary power.¹³

Much more can be said of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and its position of importance within the Lutheran Charismatic system, but let this short explanation suffice. Most CMS pastors and professors of the Renewal have weighed this concept of baptism with the Holy Spirit with the standards *Sola Gratia*, *Sola Fide*, *Sola Scriptura*, and *Sola Christo* an equally acceptable interpretation, if not a turn for the better in understanding and teaching Pneumatology.

Gifts of the Spirit

Hard on the heels of the baptism with the Holy Spirit follow the now controversial “gifts of the Spirit,” viz., tongues, healing, and prophecy (in the narrow sense): “Spiritual gifts are concrete manifestations of the Holy Spirit whom believers have received.”¹⁴ The spectrum of spiritual gifts in Scripture is broad and varied, but the greatest amount of interest has naturally fallen upon the “big three” mentioned above, by virtue of their sensational nature.

Again, the charismatic leaders in Lutheranism have done their utmost to subject the matter to scriptural and confessional testing. They contend that these gifts are properly recognized as gifts of the Holy Spirit only when they are “received by faith in the Jesus who justifies.”¹⁵ Classical Pentecostalism fixes conditions one must meet before the Spirit-baptism and subsequent gifts may be received. Basically, the conditions are: regeneration; obedience; prayer, faith.¹⁶ Thus one may find (even occasionally among Lutheran charismatics) “How to ...” pamphlets, spelling out formulas whereby readers may speak in tongues after so many not-so-easy steps. The majority of Lutheran charismatic leaders disagree. Richard Jensen of Wartburg Seminary

¹² Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 35. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960, pp. 30-31.

¹³ John T. Mueller, “Holy Baptism,” *The Abiding Word*, Vol. 2. St. Louis: Concordia, 1947, p. 414.

¹⁴ Christenson, op. cit., p. 75.

¹⁵ Dr. Ted Jungkuntz, “The Holy Spirit in Lutheran Theology,” excerpt from a lecture presented to the National Leaders’ Conference, Ann Arbor, Michigan, February 12, 1974.

¹⁶ Joel C. Gerlach, “The Holy Spirit and the Charismatic Renewal.” Paper delivered to the Northern Wisconsin District Convention, Appleton, Wisconsin, August 8, 1972, p. 27.

warned Christians about seeking the gifts of the Spirit as though some formula or set of steps could automatically guarantee the out-pouring. No one, he warns, can gain or earn the Spirit by his own doings, but, as Paul states, “the gifts are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.”¹⁷

Were not these extraordinary gifts confined to the apostolic age, when the Lord saw need of issuing supernatural gifts for the furtherance of His kingdom? The report on *The Charismatic Movement and Lutheran Theology*, published by the CTCR of the LCMS, seems to agree. After a study of the pertinent passages, they conclude:

These verses ... do not support the view of those who claim that in all ages of Christendom believers will be accompanied by a display of miracles.

On the other hand, the CTCR report goes on to admit that nowhere does Scripture suggest the opposite, that such gifts will end with the apostolic age.¹⁸ Lutheran Charismatics feel that the burden of scriptural proof rests upon those who would relegate these supernatural gifts to the first century AD. They take seriously Paul’s injunction to “earnestly seek the Spiritual gifts.” (I Corinthians 14:1), including the least of them all – glossolalia.

Tongues

To pass by this matter in a thesis on the Charismatic Renewal would be like neglecting to season a roast when preparing or consuming it. For it is “tongue-speaking” which really gives the movement its distinctive flavor and “spices up” related conversations, whether pro or con. Lutheran charismatic leaders admit that tongues can be and often are over-emphasized in their circles. One reason for this may be that it is a deeply moving personal experience which may receive disproportionate emphasis in the first flush of practice. Proper pastoral care may remedy this situation.

Another reason for the over-emphasis, as Larry Christenson explains, is that the manifestation is constantly being challenged. Anyone who enjoys a particular blessing, be it the least of all blessings, will defend it when challenged. This can be remedied, Pastor Christenson says, when we follow the apostle’s direction: “If one member is honored, all rejoice together” (I Corinthians 12:26).¹⁹

This, too, is the Lutheran charismatics’ answer to one who would label this gift as “divine.” If other members of a congregation can honestly rejoice over one’s God-given gift – any gift, from administration to teaching ability to tongues – then there is cause for *unity* and not division. The danger is there, admits Dr. Jungkuntz, for the notion of “first and second class Christians” to arise. But the gifts are given to *individual* members for edification of the *whole* body.²⁰ “Fear of promoting distinctions dare not prevent us from urging maturity. Paul is uninhibited about making such distinctions (Romans 14:1; 15:1-2).”²¹

Lutheran observers on the outside of the Renewal ask in concern, “To what extent is speaking in tongues normative in the Charismatic Movement?” Dr. Jungkuntz answers that

¹⁷ Erling Jorstad, *Bold in the Spirit*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1974, pp. 102-103.

¹⁸ *The Charismatic Movement and Lutheran Theology*. A report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the LCMS, January, 1972, p. 24.

¹⁹ Christenson, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

²⁰ Jungkuntz, taped interview.

²¹ Jungkuntz, Concordia Seminary lecture, May 12, 1975.

Lutheran charismatics believe there should be an *awareness* of the gift, and an attitude of receptivity and not rejection. To say flatly, “I will *not* receive!” is tantamount to making the error of *demanding* the gift. But tongues are *not* normative in any sense. Accusing a Christian of being defective in his faith and claiming he is *not* baptized in the Spirit if he does *not* speak in tongues is good Pentecostal theology, but far from what *Lutheran* charismatics teach.²²

Another misconception many Lutherans have of Lutheran charismatics is that they are all blithering “Schwärmer,” who have no use or regard for Holy Scripture. But in fact, as one observer noted, the Renewal “has succeeded in involving a growing number of people in an earnest reading and study of the Word.”²³ Do Lutheran Charismatics favor their own personal revelations in tongues or prophecy over the Biblical witness? The vast majority of leaders in the Renewal deny the charge at the tops of their voices.²⁴ Larry Christenson defends the charismatics:

The enthusiasts were ready to set Scripture aside in favor of their own revelations. This finds no parallel in the charismatic renewal, where the Bible functions as the fountain, rule, and norm for faith and life ... the Holy Spirit will not act contrary to nor outside of that which He has caused to be revealed and proclaimed in the external Word.²⁵

Leading writers in the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal, make frequent use of I John 4:1 and apply it to any tongues interpretation, vision, or prophecy delivered: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God.” This essayist would be happy to see the Renewal’s leaders apply this principle not only to the message itself, but also to the “spirit” of the individual delivering the message, i.e. testing his entire doctrinal system to determine whether or not his message is scriptural (I Timothy 6:3-4) and therefore credible.

Justification by Faith?

The last question here but most certainly the principal question raised by concerned Lutherans everywhere is this: “Is the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal moving away from the central doctrine of justification by faith alone?” In this aspect, the magazine *Present Truth* has done a noble job of showing how the neo-Pentecostal movement as a whole is, in effect, vitiating this central Biblical truth by emphasizing the subjective “Christ *in* us” instead of the objective “Christ *for* us.” Leaders in the Lutheran movement share the same concern. But they believe Christians may seek a genuine renewal in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and His gifts without *mixing* it into the article of justification by faith; and without *separating* it from that precious truth, either. To many Lutheran charismatics, it is the same as distinguishing between sanctification (see above definition of “Baptism with the Holy Spirit.”) and justification; between Law and Gospel; and it is “rightly dividing the word of truth” (II Timothy 2:15). “Please, please, please,” one minister wrote to me, “help Lutherans see that charismatic renewal is entirely in the

²² Jungkuntz, taped interview.

²³ Joel C. Gerlach, “Glossolalia,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*. Vol. 70, October 1973, No. 4, p. 261.

²⁴ Occasionally even Lutheran charismatics overemphasize their experience to the point of degrading Holy Scripture. For example, Rodney Lensch in his popular testimony *My Personal Pentecost* (Kirkwood, Missouri: Impact Book, 1972) makes a statement which, whether read in or out of context, must grate on the ears of every Bible-loving Lutheran: “When the Holy Spirit flooded my soul with love, I felt it. There was no need to keep quoting Bible passages.”

²⁵ Christenson, *op. cit.*, p. 112-113.

sanctification, *not justification*.” Dr. Jungkuntz points out that “central in our whole Renewal is the return again and again to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior – justification by faith alone!”²⁶

In my encounter with the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal, I have found these salient theological points to be compatible with Lutheran doctrine. The reader will notice, however, I have carefully emphasized that the definitions, interpretations, and opinions expressed here are that of the Renewal’s influential leaders and teachers. Whether or not these Biblical principles and evangelical ideals are carried out in a practical way, on the grass roots level “where the action is,” remains another question.

If the Lutheran Charismatic figureheads have successfully made these basic Pentecostal concepts to conform to Lutheran theology, and not vice-versa, may we then automatically assume that every miraculous manifestation given to a Lutheran is a valid gift from the Holy Ghost? Honest Lutherans admit that, according to Scripture, miraculous claims may be neither condemned nor condoned on the basis of the miracle itself. We don’t have the supernatural knowledge required to speak a final verdict on tongues, for example. “But,” says Professor Siegbert Becker, “we can judge, and judge accurately, when we listen to what charismatics say in English.”²⁷ Any alleged supernatural gift of the Spirit may be judged in a sure way that leaves no doubt by exposing the miracle-worker and his doctrinal confession to the revealing light of Holy Scripture (Isaiah 8:19-20; and alluded to above in connection with I John 4:1). Professor Joel Gerlach explains the process:

Our basis for judging ... is the whole counsel of God. Thus if a person comes to me and claims to have the gift of tongues ... I want to know how that person understands and confesses the gospel. If anyone comes to me, and does not bring “this doctrine” (II John 10), then ... there is no need to determine whether his ecstatic speech is of the Spirit or not. His doctrine certainly is not. On the other hand, if some one comes to me (as in one case with which I am familiar) and claims to have the gift of tongues, and confesses with me the whole doctrine of the gospel, then I am going to extend the right hand of fellowship to that person.²⁸

In view of these last pages in defense of the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal, may we as confessionally minded Lutherans endorse the Renewal within Lutheranism? May we offer Lutheran Charismatics the right hand of fellowship? There is one issue which bars me from taking such steps even though generally I see in the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal a great deal of benefit for the Christian who sincerely desires to lead a life which bespeaks his possession of baptismal grace. That issue is *fellowship*. The Lutheran leaders of the Renewal simply do not teach or practice scriptural principles of fellowship, and they in the LCMS who lend support to the Renewal are guilty of the same.

²⁶ Dr. Ted Jungkuntz, excerpt from taped lecture: “Charismatic Renewal and Lutheran Theology,” delivered at the Fargo-Moorhead Lutheran Conference on the Holy Spirit, October 29, 1976.

²⁷ Dr. Siegbert Becker, “The Charismatic Movement.” A paper delivered at the Michigan District Teachers’ Conference, Adrian, Michigan, October 10, 1974, p. 10.

²⁸ Joel C. Gerlach, op. cit., p. 249.

3. Unionism: Cause

Neo-Pentecostalism Ecumenical

J. Rodman Williams, president of Melodyland School of Theology, writes:

One of the most striking features of the charismatic movement is the resurgence of a deep unity of spirit across traditional and denominational barriers. For though the movement is occurring within many historic churches, the genius of the movement is its transdenominational or ecumenical quality.²⁹

Quite often neo-Pentecostal leaders, in a mildly condescending way, look down their noses at organized attempts toward ecumenicity:

With all due appreciation for the ecumenical movement, which has helped to bring churches together in common concern and has now and again brought about visible unity, this cannot be as lasting or far-reaching as the ecumenism emerging from a profound inward and outward renewal of the Holy Spirit.³⁰

Therefore, the movement as a whole has correctly been labeled as “the strongest ally the ecumenical movement has today.”³¹ And, the strongest ally the neo-Pentecostal movement has in achieving its ecumenical ideal is, everyone agrees, the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International.

FGBMFI

Frederick Bruner, in his classic treatise on neo-Pentecostalism, writes:

It is my present opinion that the organ most efficient in the production of Neo-Pentecostalism has been the Pentecostal work among men known as the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International, founded in 1953 in Los Angeles.³²

This organization is not a church unto itself (even though it does have a simplistic ten-point doctrinal statement to cull non-Christians or even “Christians who are unprepared to cooperate in the fellowship”³³), but rather its thrust is transdenominational. The first of its three-fold purpose is

To provide a basis of fellowship among all “full gospel” men everywhere. This is to be accomplished by creating a fellowship not directly associated with any one or several denominations, but cooperating with all of them ...³⁴

The organization’s inroads run deep into the heart of the mainline denominations. The Fellowship has published a series of pamphlets entitled *The Acts of the Holy Spirit among the Lutherans* (or *Baptists*, or *Roman Catholics*, almost any denomination has its own pamphlet)

²⁹ J. Rodman Williams, “A Profile of the Charismatic Movement” *Christianity Today*. Vol. 19, No. 11, February 28, 1975, p. 11.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

³¹ *Christian News*, Vol. 10, No. 4, January 24, 1977, p. 1.

³² Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*.

³³ Thomas W. Chopp, “The Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International,” *Christian News*, Vol. 10, No. 6, February 7, 1977, p. 8.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Today. These contain the personal “witness” of a dozen or so prominent laymen and pastors who have experienced the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

The LCMS also has not been immune to the efforts of the FGBMFI. In fact, the organization’s influence upon the Missouri Synod is greater than one would imagine. In *The Acts of the Holy Spirit among the Lutherans Today*, several LCMS pastors and laymen contribute their testimony. In a poll conducted for this thesis paper, not a few LCMS ministers expressed their connections with the FGBMFI before their experience of Spirit-baptism (cf. Appendices A & B). This is one way in which the Charismatic Renewal entered the LCMS.

LCMS Unionism

One cannot blame the FGBMFI completely, however, for doing what they do best – promoting interdenominational fellowship. After all, that’s their stated purpose. To my way of thinking, the greater blame must fall upon the pastors, professors, and lay persons within the LCMS who have condoned and participated in such unionistic worship practices, in direct opposition to the official stance of the Missouri Synod, the Lutheran Confessions, and finally Holy Scripture itself.

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 Holy 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 (FC, Epit., X, 7, p. 831). 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.³⁵

Far from this sound statement are the words one prominent Lutheran charismatic of the LCMS wrote to me:

I am convinced that the Missouri Synod position on unionism as it is promulgated by some ultra-conservatives is *anti-gospel*. It is *the* sin of Missouri ... Doctrine is not what makes the church one – Christ is. *All* who have the Spirit of Christ in them are my brothers even if they teach that crunchy peanut butter is sacramental.³⁶

This writer believes that the above quote exemplifies the attitude which opened the doors of Missouri to the Charismatic Renewal.³⁷ More than any other single factor, outside influences contributed to the Renewal’s rapid rise, by virtue of decayed fellowship principles.

³⁵ CTCR Report, op. cit., p. 30.

³⁶ David M. Dorpat. Questionnaire reply, question no. 13. From now on, questionnaire comments will not be footnoted.

³⁷ This quote represents the most extreme attitude. *Most* of the men who replied to the questionnaire would not, I’m sure, go so far as to say it in these terms. However, most of them would agree to the basic principal behind the words, that worship fellowship should not be relegated *only* to those in complete doctrinal agreement with the LCMS.

Someone may oppose this thesis, “You talk as if there could have been *no* outside influence if LCMS people had never weakened their fellowship principles. But no Missouri Pastor wears blinders, whether his fellowship principles are weak or strong – there certainly *could* have been contact and influence even if fellowship standards were comparable to WELS standards.” I agree that correct scriptural principles of worship fellowship do not and should not render one oblivious to religious developments in the world. But there is a big difference between *observing* and *participating*. For example, the pastor who participates in a charismatic prayer service is much more likely to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit than the one who merely observes exactly what has happened over the last decade with most of the charismatic pastors and professors within the LCMS – they not only observed, but also participated in unionistic worship with outside influences. The following are several examples which support my case.

Way of the Cross Lutheran Church

Probably the most controversial case in the LCMS is the well-known story of Pastor Don Pfothenauer, previously a LCMS minister to Way of the Cross Lutheran Church, Blaine, Minnesota. The problems which arose there in the mid-sixties were influential in prompting the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations to issue their report on the *Charismatic Movement and Lutheran Theology*.

Pastor Pfothenauer was led to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit through the ministry of Rev. A. G. Dornfeld, a graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary who had served LCMS parishes for 16 years. After Rev. Dornfeld’s spiritual experience, he was suspended from the ministry of the Missouri Synod and has since conducted an independent evangelistic ministry. Through the contact these two shared, which consisted of Bible study, prayer, and laying on of hands, Pastor Pfothenauer experienced his “personal reawakening resulting in the blessing of the Holy Spirit.”³⁸ Then the clash came between the Pastor (and many within the congregation who had also received the gift of Spirit-baptism) and the then district president, Ernest H. Stahlke.

Immediately president Stahlke admonished Pastor Pfothenauer, among other things, “against unionism with such who teach contrary to Scriptures.”³⁹ This was only an admonition, and was not mentioned by the district president in his initial report to the Board of Appeals. When President Stahlke suspended Pastor Pfothenauer two months later, the charismatic pastor immediately appealed to the district Board of Appeals. He also sent a letter to the District President, attempting reconciliation. In the letter,

He acknowledged that he had perhaps acted unwisely and that the results of his contact with Pastor Dornfeld were a cause of offense and stumbling to some of the members of the congregation. Inasmuch as “we are living in an age in which our church has ‘dialogue’ with just about everyone” he felt there to have been no wrong done in speaking with Dornfeld.⁴⁰

³⁸ Conrad J. Christianson, Jr., *Sola Scriptura? Traditions in Conflict, Lutheranism and Pentecostalism*. Thesis for S.T.M., Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, PA, Feb., 1973, p. 30.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

It should be noted that this statement is still a far cry from repentance over an act contrary to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. He looked upon the unionistic practice, even after the fact, as not wrong per se, but as an adiaphoron which might be “a cause of offense and stumbling.”

The Board of Appeals, after meeting with the principals and their witnesses, outlined the facts of the case. One of the points dealt with Pastor Pfothenauer’s unionistic practice.

The Rev. C. Donald Pfothenauer sought and accepted the ministration of a minister who has been suspended from the ministry of the LC-MS, in that Pastor Pfothenauer accepted the laying on of hands by which Pastor Pfothenauer professed to have received ... “the gift of speaking in tongues.”

This was also one of the reasons why the Board of Appeals upheld the suspension of Pastor Pfothenauer:

In his association and participation with the Rev. Dornfeld, at a prayer meeting, in which the laying on of hands on him was done, shows that unionism or unionistic practices were observed, though forbidden in Rm 16:16-17.⁴¹

After that followed a long list of appeals on the part of Pastor Pfothenauer.

In commenting upon the case, Pastor Pfothenauer’s brother, the Rev. Paul Pfothenauer, noted that “the accusation of unionistic practices would indict one-third of all LCMS pastors who ever prayed with other Christians.”⁴² This reflects the callused attitude many Missouri ministers evinced toward the scriptural stance which had for so long been official LCMS policy and practice. That comment was spoken in 1965. Today, one can only guess how far the ratio has developed.

To make a long story short, after finally appealing to the Synod Board of Appeals, Rev. Pfothenauer’s suspension was lifted. He continued his charismatic ministry as a LCMS member for two and one-half years, until he was again suspended on the grounds that his practices did not conform to that of the Synod’s. Here the issue was not unionism, but the congregation’s “continuing internal conflict within its ranks,”⁴³ brought about by Pastor Pfothenauer’s promulgation of his charismatic-beliefs. After more appeals to both district and synodical boards of appeals, his suspension was upheld and Way of the Cross congregation withdrew its membership from the Synod.

This writer does not claim the divine revelation required to say whether or not Pastor Pfothenauer would have gotten involved in the Renewal had he not worshipped outside of scriptural fellowship principles. One might argue that he was predisposed to receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, before he ever met Rev. Dornfeld, and would have experienced the same one way or another, unionism or not. This is true.⁴⁴ But I do know that the precipitate cause which sparked his involvement can be traced to his improper fellowship practice. Granted, this one case is not conclusive proof of my thesis, but it does support it. There are more similar examples to follow below.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 30-31.

⁴² Ibid., p. 33.

⁴³ Erling Jorstad, *op. cit.*, p. 75. Perhaps the implication of unionism could no longer be raised owing to the Synod’s ratification of its CTCR report “Theology of Fellowship” at their annual convention in July of 1967. This document, one charismatic said, “virtually removed all biblical support for the uniquely Missouri Synod doctrine of unionism.”

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 25.

A Thesis

One more outgrowth of the above case must be mentioned before proceeding. Conrad J. Christianson wrote his master's thesis centering upon this case in point, to prove that

On the grounds of a conflict of traditions and not on the grounds of scriptural heterodoxy a decision was made by the LCMS which contradicted the major theological premise of Lutheranism, i.e., that Scripture alone determines the faith and practice of Christians.⁴⁵

As he views the matter, Scripture was *not* employed in the discipline, so that Lutheran *traditions* as espoused by the LCMS became the determining factors in Pastor Pfothenauer's suspension. "Biblical, theological considerations come up short in the deliberations of the Appeal Board." In enumerating the salient points (as he saw them) which led to the district president's actions, he comments on the matter of unionism:

In an attempt to deal with the situation as swiftly as possible, two issues were raised which if found to be justifiable grounds could have been used to depose Pastor Pfothenauer without having to face the basic issue itself, that of the Pentecostal experience. These issues were unionism and the position of women in the church ... On these two counts which were beside the point, an attempt was made to deal with the situation.⁴⁶

These propositions are relevant in that one might hear the same thing from LCMS charismatics when confronted with disciplinary measures based on charges of unionism. This writer received correspondence asserting that unionism is *not* the issue, but the real issue is the charismatic experience itself. However, I don't feel that unionism is a matter lurking on the periphery of the movement, but rather it is taking a center stage spot. I mean this in more than a figurative way as, for instance, at the Fifth International Lutheran Conference on the Holy Spirit, Rev. Don Pfothenauer and Cardinal Leon Joseph Suenens embraced on stage before a crowd of 12,000 charismatics expressing their repentance and unity. An embrace in Christian love is fine – would that *all* Christians express their love toward other members of the household of faith. But would that such love also find expression in a declination of joint worship in pew and at altar! The whole theme of the conference centered on unity – "We are Gathering Together unto Him."⁴⁷ To me who has found much within the Lutheran charismatic theological (*practically* I am unsettled at this point) system to be desired, this is not unity, but *unionism*. This *is* the issue, and it prohibits me from putting any wholehearted stamp of approval on a movement which seems inseparably wedded to unscriptural fellowship principles.

Conrad Christianson's thesis is correct, insofar as his starting point is the LCA brand of worship fellowship principles. Naturally, by those standards such principles engrained in the LCMS (at least at that time) *are* merely traditional and their use in any disciplinary case *would* be unjustified. But Missouri's starting point on worship fellowship was not (and should not be) the same as the LCA's. In this way I feel Rev. Christianson begged the question by merely asserting that the LCMS position against unionism was "beside the point." Calling something "fuzzy theological thinking" does not make it so; only Scripture could prove that. What is discouraging is the fact that so many LCMS pastors and professors today, especially those

⁴⁵ Christianson, op. cit., abstract.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 25.

⁴⁷ Lutheran Charismatic Renewal Newsletter. Vol. 2, No. 9, September, 1976, p. 1.

involved in the Charismatic Renewal, consider the historic Missouri stance the same as Conrad Christianson does – “traditional,” but not scriptural.

“My Personal Pentecost”

Rodney Lensch was a Missouri Synod minister who “felt like a failure” and “knew there had to be more to the Christian life than we (his congregation) were experiencing.”⁴⁸ Now he is a leading figure within the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal and at present, the field representative for Lutheran Charismatic Renewal Services. How did he become involved? Again, his own testimony reveals that the catalyst for his baptism in the Spirit was the influence of several men outside the fellowship of the LCMS. He describes the first encounter with a minister he met at a funeral:

He was a Pentecostal! When we arrived at the mortuary again I began to share with him my feelings about myself and my ministry. He listened so sympathetically and patiently for nearly an hour and then he said, “Brother, I believe you need prayer. Do you mind if I pray?” I said, “No, not at all. Please do.” And with that we bowed our heads in the front seat of that hearse and prayed.⁴⁹

Upon the advice of this man, Pastor Lensch then seized the opportunity to attend an inter-church seminar on the Holy Spirit, directed by another Pentecostal, the Rev. Ray Bringham. Though he at first experienced fear and skepticism at the Pentecostals, Pastor Lensch soon realized that

the Lord was showing me another spiritual principle, namely, the law of interdependence in the Body of Christ. That is to say, no one denomination has a corner on God’s truth ... We need each other.⁵⁰

There he found not only the scriptural basis for Spirit baptism, but also in Rev. Ray Bringham one who was willing to lay hands upon him. It was through this medium that Pastor Lensch experienced his “personal Pentecost.”

Again, one may say that Rev. Lensch had a great *need* for renewal and would have found it somehow, maybe even by his own personal study and growth. And again, I concede that this account does not *prove* my thesis. But it does offer support. The fact remains that his actions *were* unionistic and contradictory to his Synod’s official position. One more example reveals the same pattern.

A Valparaiso Theologian

In my opinion, the one most responsible for lending theological respectability to the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal is Dr. Ted Jungkuntz, Associate Professor of Theology at Valparaiso University. This is not to say that his mere presence alone affords respectability to the movement, though to some extent this is undoubtedly true, owing to his scholarly achievements. But he has become such a valuable asset to the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal primarily due to his tireless efforts at bringing the Renewal into the proper Lutheran perspective. Through his literary talents and speaking engagements he has taken pains to indoctrinate the Lutheran Church in the merits of the Renewal. At the same time he has carefully pointed out the theological

⁴⁸ Rodney Lensch, *My Personal Pentecost*. Kirkwood, MO: Impact Books, 1972, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10-11.

extremes to be avoided by both opponents and proponents of the Renewal. In a personal way, he has done much to further my own understanding of the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal.

Dr. Jungkuntz's involvement began when several Valparaiso University students questioned him about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This prompted him to spend several months reading books dealing with the charismatic question and rereading the pertinent passages of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions with this question in mind. At about the same time, he came into contact with the Rev. A. G. Dornfeld, who was in the area. Through this association, which included prayer fellowship, Dr. Jungkuntz was led to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit and the gift of speaking in an unknown tongue.

How does he react to the proposition that decaying fellowship principles have contributed most to the Charismatic Renewal within the LCMS? In a personal interview he said:

I don't think people are led into the Charismatic Renewal by a shift in fellowship principles, because there are a lot of people in Missouri who don't honor the old fellowship principles, but certainly have not become charismatic as a result of that. In fact, they may fight it tooth and nail. I don't see that close a connection.⁵¹

The fact as Dr. Jungkuntz states is true, that not all those in the LCMS who disagree with the historic worship fellowship stance become charismatic. If unionistic worship always led to participation in the Renewal, the major portion of all Lutheranism in America would be charismatic. But this is an overstatement of my thesis. If I propose that the principal mediate cause of the Charismatic Renewal in the LCMS is poor fellowship practices, it does not necessarily follow that *all* unionistic minded members of LCMS will become charismatic. Unionism may lead one to entertain many different heterodox convictions, and not just *charismatic* doctrinal error exclusively.⁵² My point is that the majority of those in the LCMS who *have become* charismatic minded were ignited in their experience by the spark of unionism. There *are* some in the minority who, upon reading the Word on their own, received their experience without the outside human element, but these cases are rare.⁵³ Dr. Jungkuntz goes on to admit that

the Charismatic Renewal spreads as a result of people who have experienced it sharing it with others who have not, either Missouri Synod or otherwise ... I suppose you could argue: if Missouri's fellowship principles had been stringently maintained, would there today be charismatic Lutherans in the Missouri Synod? ... There certainly *has* been an influence from the outside – *my* story yesterday affirmed that.⁵⁴

Almost *every* story affirms that there were outside influences involved which consisted of unionistic worship.

A Questionnaire

⁵¹ Jungkuntz, taped interview.

⁵² Theologically speaking, at present I can detect only one doctrinal aberration connected with the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal – unionism. Cf. below: "Unionism: Effect."

⁵³ Only one such case occurred in the questionnaire. Responding to question no. 12, one minister wrote: "I was baptized in the Holy Spirit long before I knew what it meant ... I fervently studied books, the Bible, and our Book of Concord and am assured God still manifests His power among us in all gifts of the Holy Spirit."

⁵⁴ Jungkuntz, taped interview.

One could go on and on reporting in detail the accounts of just how individual LCMS charismatics were baptized with the Spirit. Charismatics love to give their personal testimonies, and Missouri charismatics are no exception. But time and space allow little more than the three examples above. Therefore, a questionnaire was sent out to as many Missouri (or recent LCMS membership) charismatic leaders as I could find. The entire results may be found in Appendix B. Below are the questions, answers, and inferences drawn which pertain to the question at hand, namely, how the Charismatic Renewal gained entry to the LCMS.

Question number four reads, “Could you, say that another person or church body was influential in leading you to your convictions regarding the Baptism in the Spirit (beside the influence of the Spirit active within you)?” Ninety-three per cent answered “yes.” This, of course, doesn’t indicate much more than the fact of. prior contact with other charismatics. “Contact” doesn’t necessarily imply unionistic worship practices. No one could be indicted who after careful observation and honest Bible study concluded that baptism with the Spirit (in the Lutheran sense) was for him, and then endeavored to procure it in a way congruous with Biblical worship principles. We could only admire such a man’s integrity and conviction. The questions grow progressively pointed.

Question number five: “Before your personal experience with the Holy Ghost, did you have any contact with ... charismatics of other denominations, church bodies, synods, *beside* LCMS? Sixty-one percent answered “yes,” with the cited church bodies primarily the major denominations, plus the ever present Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International. Again, the affirmative merely indicates contact. I do not read worship fellowship into this answer.

Question number six is the kicker: “Did the above contact involve altar, pulpit, and prayer fellowship?” The sizeable majority of 76% answered “yes.” This proves, together with the other three examples, two important points:

- 1) It is incorrect to say that decayed worship fellowship principles have not played a role in promoting the Charismatic Renewal in the LCMS. It is an understatement to say that they have. The facts reveal that unionism is the principal cause which has induced so many LCMS pastors into receiving their spiritual experiences.
- 2) On the other hand, it seems that there are cases, as evidenced by the minority, when unionism has played no role at all in bringing about the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Thus, it *is* possible for individuals to experience this spiritual event while at the same time adhering to Scriptural and confessional. principles of worship fellowship.

By now readers have noticed that I have been overlooking one important source of charismatic influence upon the LCMS which is neither outside nor unionistic, namely, the influence arising from within her own ranks and exerting itself upon other Missouri Synod members. This is only natural – today many charismatics “pass on” their joyful new experience to others within their own respective church body. This may not be denounced as unscriptural since charismatics seek only to *share* their new expression of faith so others may also be enriched. To LCMS charismatic leaders, this is in fact only their endeavor to comply with the constitution of their church body, which states that one reason for the forming of synodical union is to carry out “Our Lord’s will that the diversities of gifts should be for the common profit (I Co 12:4-31).”⁵⁵

⁵⁵ *Handbook of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, 1975 edition, Preamble, article 2.

What may and should be condemned, however, is the transmission also of unionistic worship practices which seem to go hand in hand with the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Whatever and however many God-pleasing benefits accompany the Charismatic Renewal, this effect must certainly grieve the Spirit of Truth.

4. Unionism: Effect

Two Strains

Here it should be noted that within the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal itself, there are two distinct strains. Both center on promotion of the Renewal, yet both advocate different courses of action to achieve their goal. In the past, friction has arisen as a result of these two strains coming into contact, owing to their slightly different theologies and their more widely divergent designs for future growth. Lately, however, both strains have shown more willingness to work together for the common good of the Charismatic Renewal. They are the following:

Lutheran Charisciples

This organization took form late in 1971, when five representatives of four Lutheran bodies met to pray for direction. Home-based in the Pacific Northwest, “Lutheran Charisciples were called into being on the basis of a strong and obvious ‘burden’ for persecuted and dismissed Lutheran pastors.”⁵⁶ Their national director and editor for their periodical, *Nurture and News*, is Mr. Hans Schnabel, the group has taken on a more radical disposition, leaning more toward the Pentecostal persuasion in theology and worship form.

But the major point of contention centers around the antagonistic approach Lutheran Charisciples has taken over against denominational membership. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Lutheran Charisciples’ founding fathers were for the most part suspended, dismissed, or compelled to resign from their respective church bodies. Hans Schnabel believes charismatics should be ready and willing to “move on.”

There seems to be a subtle “sentiment” among certain charismatic leaders that all who do not absolutely “submit” to the “mother church” are “rebels” and out of the will of God ... Will we let Him love us *enough* to tell us where it is at and then go and do it? Or will we first run to our respective denominational handbooks? ... the “church” can’t find and verify the Baptizer-with-the-Holy-Spirit. And, do you know why? ... Because He ain’t there, that’s why! Oh yes, the Lamb is there, but not the Baptizer.⁵⁷

This same philosophy is reflected in his brand new *Charislife Lutheran Referral Directory*, a published compilation of approximately 1500 charismatic ministries (chiefly Lutheran) across the United States.

We are keenly aware of the Holy Spirit’s present day dissuasion (from) denominationalism toward a credible witness to the *one* body-of-Christ ... Let all talk of “divisiveness” stop in the face of the extreme need for a credible “overcoming” church in these end-time days ...”⁵⁸

Lutheran Charismatic Renewal Service

The other segment of the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal, the one which seems to hold the majority both in numbers and theological competency, has been described on an earlier page.

⁵⁶ Hans Schnabel, ed., *Nurture & News*. Vol. 1, No. 2, 1972, p. 10.

⁵⁷ Hans Schnabel, ed., *Nurture & News*. Vol. 6, No. 1, January 1977.

⁵⁸ Hans Schnabel, ed., *Charislife Referral Directory*. Portland, Oregon.

Headquartered in Minneapolis, this group has been ably directed by the Rev. Larry Christenson, who is also editor of the organization's periodical. Through the efforts of LCRS, it has attempted to "maintain communication and good relationships with Lutheran church officials, and to communicate their concerns to those involved in the Renewal."⁵⁹ The following incident illustrates the LCRS leaders' point of view concerning the denominational/Lutheran Charismatic Renewal relationship: At the second International Lutheran Conference on the Holy Spirit, David Wilkerson, author of *The Cross and the Switchblade*, related to the 8,000 charismatics before him his series of five prophetic visions, and concentrated especially on the fifth.

He told of coming persecution for "spirit-filled Christians" ... he produced applause from the audience when he said "Many will not believe me, but I see a day when Catholics, Lutherans, and many others of all denominations are going to have to come out from among them. These newer Christians will not call themselves Protestants or Catholics, but simply renewed Christians" ... cheering ... louder applause followed ... no doubt causing the leaders of the conference and other new charismatics some anguish because the last thing they wanted to see happen was for this movement to split away from parent churches.⁶⁰

The majority of Lutheran charismatic leaders, then, are determined to remain within their respective denominations; those already outside advocate the same. As Dr. Jungkuntz expressed it, "The healthy thing would be to have it in the church."⁶¹

As of late, these two distinct strains seemingly are coming to better terms. Through reconciliatory meetings, each organization has agreed to recognize the other's distinctive ministry and contribution to the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal. Hans Schnabel explains the agreement in the latest *Nurture and News*:

A timely, recent meeting between the Charisciple staff and Larry Christenson (as well as Rodney Lensch) has resulted in a new understanding and appreciation of each other's national ministries to Lutherans. While both callings are uniquely "different" in God-directed service (inside and outside of the denominational structures), both need equally the prayers and support of all Holy Spirit sensitive believers. At the same time, true unity in the Holy Spirit includes the mutual release to the respective task under Christ.⁶²

It will be interesting to note the activities and growth of each Lutheran charismatic strain in the future. Now that each group has "gotten their piece of the action," this writer predicts that due to growing denominational tolerance, the importance of Lutheran Charisciples' ministry will diminish and possibly in time, abandon its "Lutheran" nuance.

The Snow Ball

How does all this relate to the thesis at hand, namely, that unionism is the effect of the Charismatic Renewal within the LCMS? It has already been established that the trend has been for Lutheran Charismatics to remain within their respective denominations and, as Dr. Jungkuntz

⁵⁹ Larry Christenson, ed., *Lutheran Charismatic Renewal Newsletter*. Vol. 2, No. 9, September 1976.

⁶⁰ Jorstad, op. cit., pp. 84-85.

⁶¹ Jungkuntz, taped interview.

⁶² Hans Schnabel, ed., *Nurture & News*. Vol. 6, No. 2, March 1977.

says, witness where they are, so that all will be leavened, renewed, and grow to maturity.⁶³ If the leaders in the LCMS and their followers *do* remain (and they are) within their church, then it is obvious that the movement will grow internally. As stated before, the Charismatic Renewal is in a sense, “self-propagating.” Two psychologists from the Department of Anthropology at the University of Minnesota have borne this out through their study of the primary causes in the development of the movement. One factor instrumental in the growth of neo-Pentecostalism is

“Face-to-face recruitment along lines of preexisting significant social relationships.” Gerlach and Hine found that relatives accounted for the recruitment of 52% of their total sample, and close friends for another 29%.

“Other recruiting relationships were those between neighbors, business associates, fellow students, employer-employee, or teacher-student, in which previous significant interaction had occurred.”⁶⁴

As stated at the outset of this paper, my purpose is not to issue a blanket condemnation of the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal. But as the Renewal propagates itself within Missouri, it will also bring with it the unscriptural, unconfessional, and unsynodical worship fellowship practices. In this way, unionism is also a principal effect of the Charismatic Renewal, which can only be detrimental to our once confessionally strong sister synod. Poor fellowship practices are so closely tied to the movement, one may almost extrapolate that unionism will grow within the LCMS in proportion to the Renewal’s inroads into the Synod.⁶⁵

By way of analogy, the process may be likened to the situation of a man standing on the side of a steep hill in winter, making a snowball on the ground. As he packs the snow into the ball, he gives it a shove and starts rolling it. As he rolls it, all the while packing more and more snow onto it, the snowball grows, gaining in size and momentum. This continues until it is rolling so fast and it has grown so big that it now rolls from its own inertia. As it continues on down the hill, now without any help from the man, it nevertheless accumulates more and more snow which lies before it.

In the same way the Missouri Charismatic Renewal gets its start and shove from outside influences, with unionistic worship involved. It keeps on growing, to the point when it can sustain itself on its own inertia, without any outside influences. Nevertheless it continues to associate itself with the outside by means of spurious worship principles.

Admittedly, one may find, this analogy limps. But the point of comparison, I think, is clear. Admittedly, no analogy may be used to prove a point, but is used merely for clarification. Therefore, I bring proof to support my thesis. The same three examples, plus the questionnaire supply the meat for my case.

Rev. Don Pfothauer

Pastor Pfothauer has been suspended from the ministry of the LCMS. Yet since the suspension he has continued to influence many Lutherans both inside and outside Missouri, due to his prominent role in the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal. His leadership has not always been God-pleasing, though, inasmuch as he has not only directed many to find personal renewal and Christ-centered growth – which is good, but he has also

⁶³ Jungkuntz, taped interview.

⁶⁴ CTCR Report, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁶⁵ This is not to imply, of course, that there are no other factors within the LCMS which contribute to the decay of their historic worship fellowship practices.

Directed many to false unity with heterodox church bodies – which is bad. The following is just such a case.

In answer to question number ten of the poll, I received quite a lengthy letter from one retired Missouri minister, a fine Christian man. Throughout his ministry the subjects of “Spirit-empowered life for service” and “speaking in tongues” both intrigued and yet puzzled him. Then, in 1965, he received word that his nephew, who happens to be Don Pfothenauer, received the gift of the Holy Spirit and subsequently was suspended. That prompted the older minister to dig into the subject. I’ll let him tell his story.

What does Scripture say? I want to accept only what Scripture teaches. If this gift is for today, I wanted to have it. I wrote to my nephew and told him I would spend a few days with him. I also wrote in my letter that I wanted to receive “the baptism with the Holy Spirit” through a man who was in the LCMS. Of course I realized that Jesus is the only one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit, but He uses men through whom He gives this. I didn’t want to have anything to do with the emotional Pentecostals. Furthermore I could be accused of practicing unionism, and could be put out of my church because of it. I wanted it all to be Kosher. Well I made that long trip up to Minneapolis. I talked to him and his wife. He took me into his church (at that time he had been reinstated to his congregation). I knelt down before the altar. He laid his hands on my head and prayed that Jesus would baptize me with the Holy Spirit. He prayed in tongues. This was the first time I heard “speaking in tongues”! But nothing happened to me. I could not speak in tongues. That same evening we had another little prayer session, but again nothing happened. He was wondering what was blocking the way of my receiving this gift. He looked at my letter again and told me that he thought it was because I wanted to receive the gift through a LCMS pastor, and not through some other denomination. But the Lord wanted to show me that His gifts are not for any one denomination, but can be poured out through any of them.

I went home a little disappointed, because I did not speak in tongues. After I arrived home I received an invitation in the mail to attend a supper meeting, in some restaurant in Rockford of the Full Gospel Business Mens Fellowship. A pastor from the United Church of Christ, who was Spirit filled, was going to talk on the Charismatic Movement. I just felt I had to go and attend that meeting. It may be here that I would receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The man spoke very simple and plain, just quoting one Scripture after another. What appealed to me was that he was so unemotional in his talk. He invited those who wanted to receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit to stay. I stayed and after he spoke a very short simple prayer I received and spoke my first words in a new tongue. What joy and happiness this brought to me, knowing that the Lord pours out His gifts on His believers today, even as he did on that first Pentecost.

Later on the minister, likened himself to Naaman in the Old Testament, who came to the prophet Elisha in order to receive a cure for his leprosy.

I too wanted to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the “pure and unadulterated waters” of the LCMS, instead of going to the dirty waters of Pentecostalism. You see the Lord did not answer my prayer in the “pure waters of

the LCMS, but in the muddy waters of the FGBMFI, which is a mixture of all the various denominations, but which emphasizes the Baptism of the Holy Spirit...”

Here is an individual who was actually counseled by Lutheran Charismatic leader to engage in non-denominational (rather “all-denominational”) worship! One can hardly mistake the opinion Rev. Pfothauer held concerning his church’s official position on joint worship with heterodox religions. One can hardly mistake the fact that he effected another change of opinion in another LCMS minister, his uncle. Whatever, good may have resulted in this unionistic meeting must not be pointed to as justification for this unscriptural and unconfessional conduct, lest we fall into the danger of situation ethics. One can only pray that God would bring good from the evil involved in this and many more examples.

Rev. Rodney Lensch

Once Pastor Lensch received the Holy Spirit and “signs following,” (such as tongues, healing, prophecy) the matter became a bone of contention within his congregation, resulting in his resignation. The ensuing ten month wait for a call convinced him that the Lord wanted him “to be free to minister not to any one denomination, but to His people in general, to the Body of Christ wherever it may be.” Finally he resigned from the Lutheran ministry to establish an “interdenominational faith ministry.”

The Lord instilled in me a spontaneous love for them (believers of many different denominational backgrounds) and a recognition that they are my brothers and sisters in Jesus as much as my Lutheran friends are. All this was designed by the Lord to make me more and more conscious of Christians as the Body of Christ and less and less as members of different denominations.⁶⁶

Certainly no one can find fault with such a fine evangelical statement! Scripture will never assert otherwise. It is tragic that his past ministry, seminary training, and study of the Word never led him to the same conviction. The erroneous conclusion he draws from such a statement is equally tragic: In delineating “Guidelines on How to walk in the Spirit,” one point is

Having frequent fellowship with Spirit-baptized believers ... Although there may be some risks involved it is very necessary for those who have received the Spirit to be in regular fellowship with like-minded people, either within their local congregation outside of it or perhaps both, if possible.⁶⁷

This line of reasoning is typically characteristic of all (possibly overstated) Charismatics within the LCMS, namely, that joint worship *must* be a result of recognition of the one Body of Christ and mutual love for that Body. Perhaps this faulty line of reasoning has come about as the result of *correct* Biblical worship principles being applied in a *legalistic* manner over a number of years. Who can say? For the Bible-believing Christian who follows the *correct* “guidelines on how to walk in the Spirit” as He reveals in Holy Scripture, and applies them in Christian love for his erring brother, such rationalization may seem difficult to follow as well as maddeningly confusing. But in this way, Charismatics (and any who reason thusly) have in their misconception fallen prey to “Dame Reason” instead of bowing in eager obedience to the

⁶⁶ Lensch, op. cit., pp. 22-27.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 57.

principles of the gospel, the law of love. And the Charismatic Renewal continues to affect/infect the LCMS through this spiritually unwholesome leaven.

Dr. Ted Jungkuntz

One upshot of the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal has been the rise of local, regional, and national “conferences on the Holy Spirit.” Quite often these conferences have proved to be excellent arenas for threshing out the points of divergence between Pentecostal and Lutheran theology. Professor Dr. Jungkuntz has taken the opportunities to attend not a few of these conferences and has thereby managed to temper the meetings with unmistakably Lutheran theology.

But more often than not, these conferences have no synodical sanction, and the participants make no apology for joining in worship fellowship with Christians of heterodox church bodies. The all-denominational trend has matured to the point where Lutheran leaders have seen fit to change the name of the granddaddy “International Lutheran Conference on the Holy Spirit” to “Conference on Charismatic Renewal in the Christian Churches.” Each church body will retain its identity “through a series of denominational charismatic conferences within the context of the general conference.”⁶⁸ One is led to wonder how much of a “distinctive Lutheran element” will exert itself upon the theology and practice evinced during the joint worship sessions. This writer predicts that all the efforts of Dr. Jungkuntz and other Lutheran charismatic theologians will then go down the drain as blatantly unscriptural and un-Lutheran doctrine will emerge.

Through the course of our discussion, it became clear that Dr. Jungkuntz would answer “yes” to question number seven of the questionnaire: “Do you now participate in altar, pulpit, and prayer fellowship with members (especially charismatic) of other church bodies beside LCMS?” In his case, the worship would involve prayer fellowship primarily. In answer to question number eight, “Have your fellowship practices (i.e. worship) with any other denomination experienced a *marked* increase the Renewal?” he said,

I’m sure it has had that kind of an effect. My whole life-style has been affected. My priorities have led me into union as a results of my involvement in the Charismatic Renewal.⁶⁹

There are many more examples I could give, most notably from answers to questions eleven through thirteen in the survey, which support my thesis that unionism is a major effect of the Charismatic Renewal in the LCMS. Now to the survey itself.

The Questionnaire

Question number seven is probably one of the most critical questions to substantiate my proposition that unionism is an effect of the Charismatic Renewal. “Do you now participate in altar, pulpit, and prayer fellowship with members (especially charismatic) of other church bodies beside LCMS?” Eighty-six percent answered “yes.” This high percentage would mean little standing alone, since a high percentage of those polled answered “yes” to number six, which reveals that many were practicing poor fellowship habits already *before* their involvement in the Renewal. What really lends credence to my thesis is that 50% of those who answered “yes” to number seven had answered “no” to number six. *Half* of the men who adhered to the historic

⁶⁸ *Christian News*, Vol. 9, No. 13, April 5, 1976, p. 3.

⁶⁹ Jungkuntz, taped interview.

Missouri position on worship fellowship prior to their charismatic experience now practice otherwise! And the church bodies with which they do practice union run the entire gamut of Christendom (cf. Appendix B)!

To question number eight, “Have your fellowship practices (i.e. worship) with any other denominations experienced a *marked* increase since your involvement with the Renewal?” Fifty-seven percent answered “yes.” At first this did not appear to be a strong enough percentage to support my thesis that the Charismatic Renewal in the LCMS effects unionism. But when I examined the questionnaires which answered “no” to this question (#8), I found that half of them had answered “yes” to question numbers five and six, revealing that they *already had* unionistic tendencies before their affiliation with the movement. Therefore, a goodly percentage of those who experienced no *marked* increase in their joint worship with other charismatics outside of Missouri, found the unionistic direction of the Renewal to be compatible with their *former* attitude on joint worship. With reference to this fact, the 57% who did answer “yes” to question number eight provides me with enough evidence to conclude that unionism is indeed a definite effect of the Charismatic Renewal in the Missouri Synod.

The Lay Reaction

For obvious practical reasons, I’ve dealt with the leaders (i.e. pastors and teachers) of the LCMS Renewal alone in my research. But if we apply the question in point to the lay people of the Missouri Synod, it isn’t difficult to deliver an answer. In relation to worship fellowship principles, what effect will the Charismatic Renewal have on the lay members of the Synod? A major study, of the charismatic experience, *The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues*, by psychologist John Kildahl, can almost provide us with the answer: “Charismatics tend to depend more on authority figures, such as a respected pastor or dynamic church leader.”⁷⁰ There is no reason to believe that the charismatic lay person who sees his spiritual shepherd practicing joint worship with other heterodox denominations (or non-denominations) won’t also attempt the same.

The answer to question number nine points out that a large percentage of ministers are leading their parishioners into the same error, and not just by their example. Forty-six percent answered “yes” to the question, “Have you led your congregation into worship fellowship with charismatics of other denominations?” It should be noted, however, that many of these men qualified their answer with statements such as this: “As individuals have expressed the desire.” This percentage will undoubtedly increase as tolerance for the Renewal grows within the LCMS.

All of the evidence presented points out the truth of my thesis, that unionism is definitely a major effect of the Charismatic Renewal upon the Missouri Synod. It is by no means the *only* effect; nor do I wish to imply by this that there are no *beneficial* effects to come from the movement inside of LCMS. But the facts show that *one* major outgrowth which has been cultivated by the Renewal is the spiritually detrimental practice of unionism.

⁷⁰ Jorstad, op. cit., p. 115.

5. Lutheran Charismatic Basis for Fellowship

Undoubtedly this question has arisen in the reader's mind, "What then is the basis for fellowship among Lutheran Charismatics?" The question is not as easy to answer as one may think. First it is necessary in this regard to review the principles of Classical Pentecostal theology.

The Neo-Pentecostal Basis

Pentecostals the world over rally around the one thing they have in common: their spiritual experience. The Pentecostal authority Walter J. Hollenweger:

The bond of union was to be the presence of the living God the reality of the Holy Spirit, which people looked forward to receiving in conversion, sanctification, the baptism of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit.⁷¹

And, on the other side of the fence, the polemicist Frederick Dale Bruner:

Theologically, the adherents of the Pentecostal movement unite around an emphasis upon the experience of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual believer and in the fellowship of the church.⁷²

This experiential rallying point has also carried over into the Charismatic Renewal in general. Richard Quebedeaux of the Baptist General Conference, in his book *The New Charismatics*, expands the concept to enclose the entire movement:

The primacy of a common experience that leads to theological truth in Pentecostalism is one reason why evangelicals, liberals and Roman Catholics have been joined together (spiritually at least) for the first time...⁷³

It would be very convenient to say that the same holds true for the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal. Many opponents of the Lutheran Renewal, in fact, do accuse Lutheran Charismatics of the same error, namely, of relying on experience instead of Scripture as a basis for fellowship. *Christian News*, for example, zealously attacks the movement, categorizing all charismatics as despisers of the Word. To Herman Otten, this is the one common denominator which draws liberals and charismatics together.

Neither the charismatics nor the liberals. ("moderates") accept the scriptural and Lutheran principle of Sola Scriptura. Both rely in part on human reason, visions, and feelings as the source of their philosophy.⁷⁴

The Missing Link

There is an element of truth in what this controversial figure declares. Both Pentecostalism and Liberalism have a great deal in common, so much so that they "are in fact fraternal twins," says Professor C. George Fry. It was through his enlightening essay

⁷¹ Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals: The Charismatic Movement in the Churches*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972, p. 505.

⁷² Bruner, op. cit., p. 20.

⁷³ *Christian News*. Vol. 10, No. 10, March 7, 1977, p. 3.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, No. 51, December 27, 1976, p. 12.

“Pentecostalism in Historical Perspective” that this significant truth was impressed upon this writer. He writes:

Pentecostalism has arisen out of precisely those conditions that produced Liberalism. The two movements are derived from the same sources, made of identical stuff, promoted by a common skepticism, permeated by a pervasive humanism, dominated by an inescapable naturalism, saturated with materialism, and they both result in a perversion of the Gospel ... it is an illusion to regard Pentecostalism as the very antithesis of Liberalism ... they have much more in common than in opposition.⁷⁵

And yet I could not in all honesty indict the *entire* Lutheran Charismatic Renewal, particularly as it is found in the LCMS, on grounds of espousing modernistic theology. Granted there are many liberals within Missouri who are charismatic. But there are also many Bible-believing Christians who oppose modernism; who believe in the plenary inspiration of Scripture; who cherish their Lutheran heritage in its history, theology, and worship forms; who are likewise charismatic. Yet, as Erwin Prange, another prominent Lutheran charismatic, informed me: “Most charismatics, even very conservative ones tend to become more ecumenical.”

This was my problem, finding the “missing link,” the basis which allows the conservative element among the LCMS charismatics to unite in worship with the liberal element among the charismatics. I knew that the union was not like Classical Pentecostalism, founded upon crass experimentalism. I knew it was not founded on pure Biblical doctrine, in view of the “moderates.” I knew it was not founded on modernistic theology, in view of the “conservatives.” What is the missing link?

I received the first clue while reading the Concordia Seminary student publication *Spectrum*. The following quote is excerpted from an interview of Chaplain Robert Stamps of Oral Roberts University:

Q: In St. Louis, and you know the situation there at least in part, one of the few places where there is any interaction between Concordia Seminary and Seminex is among the charismatics of each institution. What is it that generates this community? Glossolalia?

A: I don't think that the charismatic community “gathers” around speaking in tongues ... It's because of the warm presence of Christ (and that's a very loose phrase) that is present among charismatics. There's something bigger in their own experience than their differences: Christ is active, Christ who loves everyone. The charismatics realize they have a lot of in common simply because they have Christ in common.⁷⁶

Seminex charismatics and Concordia charismatics find the bond of union in the very personage of *Jesus Christ*, missing link, whereby the “conservatives” may enjoy worship fellowship with “moderates.” Dr. Ted Jungkuntz believes that in this lies the answer to the turmoil raging within the Synod.

⁷⁵ C. George Fry, “Pentecostalism in Historical Perspective,” *The Springfielder*. Vol. 39, No. 4, March, 1976, pp. 183-184.

⁷⁶ “Charismatic Renewal and Oral Roberts University ... an Interview with Chaplain Stamps,” *Spectrum*, Vol. 9, No. 15, January 21, 1977, p. 8.

The present controversy in the LC-MS, insofar as it is theologically based, resolves around what have come to be termed the formal (Holy Scripture) and the material (Gospel) principles. The disagreement comes to occur at the point of determining how the two are related to one another. The “moderates” are accused of “Gospel-reductionism,” i.e., taking seriously only that in Scripture which has the quality of law and Gospel, thus supposedly undercutting the way God’s revelation is rooted in history (I Jn 4:1-3). The “conservatives” on the other hand, are accused of what might be called “Gospel-expansionism,” i.e., teaching “another Gospel”(Ga 1:69) by a supposedly unevangelical use of portions of Scripture. Charismatics, depending upon their theological and cultural background, can go either way in the controversy but I think the Majority would discern here a Satanically inspired “disputing about words, which does no good but only ruins the hearers” (II Tm 2;14; Rm 14:15. Instead of focusing on the authority of Scripture and/or the authority of the Gospel, they would prefer to see the two perfectly related in the authority of Jesus Christ himself ... Charismatics appeal to all sides in the LC-MS that Christ not be divided by a party which may appear to encourage Gospel-reductionism or a party which may appear to encourage Gospel-expansionism ... but “by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgement (I Co 1:10-17). Only the authority of Jesus Christ can effect that miracle. And it is the Holy Spirit who puts us into contact with the authority of Jesus Christ.⁷⁷

Thus, at the center of charismatic fellowship is Jesus Christ, whether one emphasizes the external Word and all its content, or only those passages which are clearly Law-Gospel (a la Paul Bretschler: *After the Purifying*). The coming charismatic conference in Kansas City will emphasize this very link. Rev. Larry Christenson says that “the conference will be a great sign to our nation and to the world that the Spirit of God is bringing people into unity”⁷⁸ The theme of the conference? “Jesus is Lord.”

Finally, this christocentric foundation for unity was brought out again and again in the questionnaire. Number ten queries, “Do you believe the Charismatic Renewal to be a common bond unifying all Christian denominations, despite doctrinal differences?” The majority of 71% answered “yes.” But almost all the answers, whether “yes” or “no” pointed to the Lordship of Jesus and the gospel.

When first asked, Dr. Jungkuntz answered with a solid negative, claiming that only Jesus Christ is the firm foundation – He is the unifying factor and “common bond” for all Christians. Later in the discussion, however, he said that the Charismatic Renewal could be understood correctly as a “common bond,” if it was considered not a *basis* for unity, but a *catalyst*. “The basis is Jesus Christ, but by the catalyst people are being drawn together around the name of Jesus.”⁷⁹ This seems to be the general consensus of opinion among the leading Lutheran charismatics.

Is the bond a valid one? Have we been missing out on the “missing link”? Charismatics would say so. But they would also say that here is the chance to remain “Gospel-expansionists”

⁷⁷ Theodore Jungkuntz, “Authority – A Charismatic Perspective,” *Currents in Theology and Mission*, June 1976, pp. 171-172.

⁷⁸ Hans Schnabel, ed. *Nurture & News*. Vol. 6, No. 2, March 1977.

⁷⁹ Jungkuntz, taped interview.

if we so desire, and yet: “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3). If conservatives so desire, they can have their purity of doctrine as bestowed in the external Word, and *still* enjoy fellowship in the community of believers, whether they are doctrinally upright or not. After all, isn’t Jesus Christ the only sure foundation upon which every believer builds his faith and life?

The proposition that Jesus Christ is the only firm foundation upon which one builds for eternity is the Gospel truth (I Corinthians 3:1). The assumption that we may engage in worship fellowship with any and all who possess Christ as their foundation is nothing but pernicious rationale. In essence, this is the same “agree to disagree” logic rearing its ugly head again in a different form. The *Biblical* line of reasoning is that the believer who has a personal union with Christ by faith loves Christ’s Word, and Christ commanded us to avoid (in the sense of worship fellowship) all who teach what is contrary to His Word (John 14:23; Roman 16:17; I Timothy 6:3), whether Christian or non.

The charismatic approach to unity in worship fellowship may not exactly find its source in “gospel-reductionism,” which limits the authority of the Bible to obvious law-gospel statements. But it is rooted in something quite nearly identical because it divorces the authority of the external Scriptures from the authority of Jesus Christ. One might call it “*Christ-reductionism*,” in much the same way men like Rev. Bretscher divorce the *written* Gospel (canonical Scriptures) from the Gospel message of Christ. Charismatic Lutherans who claim to be conservative and yet participate in joint worship with liberal charismatics (of *any* denomination) are really *by their actions* professing to hold the same perverted view of Biblical authority as the modernists do, even though they may not verbalize it and in all sincerity avow the opposite. In my opinion, they are selling their Lutheran birthrights for a mess of unionistic pottage.

The missing link isn’t new. Luther had a word for it when Erasmus emphasized that “Christ crucified should rather be preached,” while at the same time he was willing to ignore other doctrines. Luther called it “Carping obstructionism.” He admitted that Christ crucified is to be preached first and foremost. “But” – and it was a big ‘*but*’ – “Christ crucified brings all these doctrines with Him.”⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*. Tr. J. I. Packer and I. O. Johnston. Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1957, p. 107.

6. Considerations

LCMS Charismatic Renewal

Little more needs to be said about this essayist's thoughts on the Charismatic Renewal within the Missouri Synod. My sentiments concerning all of the Renewal's aspects may be gleaned from the foregoing. All in all, I find myself sympathetic to the Lutheran Renewal's intentions; generally satisfied with its theology, but unsure of its practice; critical of both its theology and practice in respect to its biblically deficient fellowship principles. There are some other observations which should be noted.

No "False" Christian Churches

David Dorpat, one outspoken leader among charismatics in Missouri, writes:

When the grace of God brought me into the fullness of the Holy Spirit, I began to see that members of other denominations were really Christians... In fact, I saw that many Lutherans who knew and believed all the "right doctrines" were dead compared to these new-found brothers and sisters with all their "errors." God, through the charismatic renewal, caused me to see the unity of the church. I had been building up walls and barriers which Jesus had removed. I had been denying Christ in my brothers and it was the Lord's "tongues movement" which was instrumental in bringing the barrier down. The charismatic movement does unite.⁸¹

The quote serves to illustrate one particular error of many charismatic pastors which seemed to crop up regularly in my research. I have alluded to it earlier, but its significance warrants further explanation. The error, simply stated, is "since there is only *one* Body of Christ, i.e. the Holy Christian Church, therefore we may worship together in unity with any believer in Christ." In other words, there is no such thing as a "false Christian Church," no such thing as "heterodoxy." The heresy is so acceptable to so many because it's prepositional assertion is true: "There is *one* Body of Christ – the Holy Christian Church."

Holy Scripture supports this comforting truth, that the Christian church is composed of all true believers in Christ (Romans 12:4-5). Membership in this church, as Professor John Meyer's *Dogmatics Notes* state, "does not presuppose perfect knowledge and understanding nor a certain degree of sanctification. The understanding of even its most advanced members will remain imperfect (I Corinthians 13:9-12) and may even be tinged with erroneous conception (Romans 14:1-3)."⁸² The words of Rev. Dorpat seem to imply that Missouri has never espoused this doctrine of the Invisible Church. But Francis Pieper in *Christian Dogmatics* clearly shows that salvation may *not* be restricted to fellowship with any visible church or that would make salvation dependent on something other than through faith in Christ.⁸³ In this sense, there is definitely an *inward* fellowship in the Body of Christ which all believers enjoy.

Professor Richard Balge has observed that "heresy is only truth carried to an extreme." This axiom is again proved true as the charismatic Lutheran leaders make the false conclusion that they may therefore unite in worship fellowship with members of Christian denominations which persist in unbiblical teaching. The distinction between orthodox Christianity and

⁸¹ David M. Dorpat, "The Divisive Tongues Movement." Position paper obtained from the author, p. 3.

⁸² John Meyer, *Dogmatics Notes*. Mequon: Seminary Mimeo Co., p. 150.

⁸³ Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. 3. St. Louis: Concordia, 1953, pp. 424-425.

heterodox Christianity must be maintained without mixing or separation. Granted that a separation leads to self-righteousness and a vitiation of justification by faith alone. The Christian denomination which excludes all other church bodies from Christianity, even ones which possess the marks of the Church, namely Word and Sacraments, makes salvation dependent on its own label and not upon faith in Christ alone. But on the other hand a mixing of the two results in false unity and offense (*σκάνδαλον*) through condoning of doctrinal error. The denomination which unites worship with all other bodies possessing the marks of the church even though they may err doctrinally, offers no loving, brotherly witness against such sin. Even Dr. Jungkuntz, who so fervently emphasizes the importance of making evangelical distinctions, fails to make this one.⁸⁴

Internal Change

Of those charismatics within the LCMS who do show a degree of doctrinal concern, there is a genuine hope that through the whole movement, the Holy Spirit will work upon those church bodies which cling to error a realization of the truth as presented in Scripture. They claim that the Holy Spirit is effecting changes, leading Christians into greater maturity, especially through an increased love and study of the Word. The question was put to Dr. Jungkuntz:

Q: Would you say that with the Charismatic Renewal as a catalyst and Jesus Christ as the center, that sooner or later everyone would come to a knowledge of the true doctrinal content of Scripture, *every* doctrine ... so that finally they would all come to believe the truths as found in the Book of Concord?

A: In essence, yes. Maybe not in that terminology, but yes.⁸⁵

One can only hope and pray that the Comforter would indeed bring about such a change among the heterodox Christian churches, through his Word. There are hundreds of accounts how Roman Catholic charismatics are returning to their Bibles and “turning on” to the sweet Gospel comfort of justification by faith.

This heartening, and joyful fact, does not, however, give one a basis for worship fellowship. Until such a day comes when the main-line denomination is so swayed by the power of the Word that it officially denounces *all* its heresy, there is the danger of intimating compromise in joint denominational worship. To give anyone the impression that Truth maybe compromised is tantamount to giving offense.

But, one charismatic pastor asked, “Would it not be honest to talk to people individually about their faith than to automatically categorize them just because they are members of one particular denomination?” The question is valid, since today one’s personal beliefs don’t necessarily always correspond to the doctrinal system of his denomination. It *may* be possible, on the basis of an individual’s confession, to privately worship with that individual who honestly feels conscience-bound to remain within his heterodox church body and affect reform. But at the same time, would it not be honest for this individual to bring about the reform in his denomination not subversively, but *openly* start in with his erring spiritual shepherd? Any refusal on the individual’s part to *honestly* and *openly* oppose his church’s doctrinal error, even if it seems inexpedient would, it seems to me, forfeit any opportunity for even private worship fellowship. Lutheran charismatics often compare their Renewal to the Lutheran Reformation. Possibly. But here is one point of divergence: the Reformation consisted in open, honest dissent

⁸⁴ Jungkuntz, taped interview.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

with the established Church. But the Charismatic Renewal, judging by the difficulty I had in acquiring a list of involved LCMS ministers, often gives me the impression of an invasion rather than reformation.

The many charismatic leaders who have, however, displayed a great deal of openness to me, can only be respected for their honest convictions. Here is the time to note also the sincere love and concern which the vast majority of these Christian men displayed to me. Even the most vociferous opponents of the WELS “narrow definition of unionism” didn’t hesitate to bid me Godspeed on my “charismatic journey: and to offer up prayer to the Holy Spirit on my behalf.

WELS Charismatic Renewal?

The question is intriguing, but the answer lies in the future. Along with this question should attend another: “Is it possible for the Charismatic Renewal to thrive in a context where biblicism and confessionalism is maintained to the point where scriptural worship guidelines are commonly practiced?” It is this writer’s opinion that the Charismatic Renewal will never amount to much in our synod. The movement, Lutheran or not, is undeniable unionistic – born from unionism and borne on unionism. It will never reject its birthright. At present, WELS is strong in emphasizing fellowship principles of worship, perhaps hardened against unionism from the blows of controversy which fell upon us several decades ago. Experienced theologians who possess a far greater degree of foresight than I predict that our synod’s next doctrinal test will come in a different form from the last. But perhaps the Charismatic Renewal will enter our church body through a “back door” approach, rather than via unionism. Time will tell.

The question was put to Dr. ~ Jungkuntz:

Q: You know our stand on fellowship, that we can’t hold to an ecumenism which is not based on anything other than the entire word and doctrine of Scripture. Could you see the Charismatic Renewal becoming a force within the Wisconsin Synod, where according to charismatic standards and almost any other denomination’s standards, ecumenism is stunted?

A: I think I’d have to say “yes” to this. The Spirit works where He wills, and wherever people are open and desirous of being renewed themselves and want to grow in appropriation of their justification, the Lord will answer their prayer.

And speaking from his own convictions, Dr. Jungkuntz continued:

If the Charismatic Renewal becomes a force within the WELS, it would radically change your present mistaken ideas concerning worship fellowship.⁸⁶

His conclusion is probably correct.

When It Arrives

The reader may know of some instances where the Charismatic Renewal has already entered WELS. The areas which have produced the most notable cases are those where the movement has been a prominent religious force – the Midwest and Southern California. Practically speaking, this writer claims not one iota of experience on which to rely; my advice would lack credibility. The actions of those men who *have* had to deal with it on a first hand

⁸⁶ Ibid.

basis, though, deserve our attention (cf. Appendix C). The evangelical, pastoral approach these men took could possibly set an excellent precedent to be followed.

The first account had a happy beginning and ending, involving only one man. He honestly approached his pastor, informing his shepherd that he had received the gift of tongues. Upon discussion, the pastor learned that the charismatic didn't consider himself superior to the other members. The District President wrote:

When we told him that he would not be dealt with as long as he did not make propaganda, it was not that we were calling his gift a sin, but for the same reason Paul speaks as he did to the Corinthians. It caused divisions in the congregation at Corinth, and people were thinking themselves better than others if they had certain gifts. We must be very careful not to call any gift of the Holy Spirit a sin. Who are we to say that He cannot give whatever gifts He wills to give. You speak of "disciplinary action" and of "suspension." This would only happen if what I said earlier were the case (divisiveness).

Since that time the man was elected to the presidency in his congregation. When he informed the congregation, he did it in such a way that no one was offended. This congregation found it possible to live in peaceful coexistence with the Charismatic Renewal. I believe it can be done.

Another case, which was handled by Pastor Raymond Schultz of Wausau, wasn't quite so easy. A group of about a dozen people started attending services conducted by Rev. Merton Jannusch, a charismatic who was suspended from the LCMS. Here the matter became cause for division in the congregation as the "spirit-filled" members labeled the rest of the congregation as hypocrites.

Finally, after patient intercession between the "charismatics" and the congregation, eight members remained with the congregation and are "now following correct principles of fellowship." Pastor Schultz's advice is probably the most significant piece of source material I obtained in all my research:

My reaction to the experience would be this: First, don't overreact when people become involved, they become terribly confused. When they see first hand such phenomena as the so-called speaking in tongues, etc., and a dead congregation come alive, as Almena, they cannot see how this can be anything but the hand of the Holy Spirit.

Second, be ready to take a lot of abuse from them. They will accuse you of having withheld some of the Scripture from them, that you did not teach them these gifts of the Holy Spirit are available to them. They may make it obvious that they don't consider you a Christian, as the mother did to whom I referred above. So they had a meeting one night to pray that Pastor Schultz also might come to Christ. Remember that they could do worse. They could curse you.

Third, be aggressive in your attempt to get them back. They aren't going to come to you, if they think they have found something better.

Fourth, deal with them as families or individuals. Don't try to deal with the whole group. They're not all on the same level of involvement.

Fifth, before discipline or suspension of any kind, be certain whether you are dealing with a weak, and confused Christian, or with an unbeliever, i.e. whether

you are still dealing with one who places his hope in the redemption of Christ alone, or whether you are now dealing with one who has “cross over,” and now places his hope in his experience of the Holy Spirit’s Baptism, rather than in the redemption of Christ.

For the seminarian facing his first year in the public ministry of the Gospel, this kind of advice is priceless.

But this counsel is offered in anticipation of *problems* which surface together with the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Might not the minister *channel* in a Gospel-centered way the uses of his parishioner’s Spiritual gifts, in a way which is mutually edifying for the church? Dr. Jungkuntz has taught that “Lutherans will minister best to (Lutheran) charismatics when the latter are not looked upon so much as potential trouble-makers as possible bearers of much-needed spiritual renewal.”⁸⁷ The congregational president noted above is one example of exactly this type of situation. The congregation and their shepherd didn’t panic at the mention of tongues, and eventually the Holy Ghost visited upon him another and more valuable gift of *administration* (Romans 12:8) through a congregational call to serve. Professor Gerlach gives some practical advice on how to deal with glossolalists who find themselves in complete doctrinal agreement with the WELS biblical position (cf. also quote no. 28, p. 10):

I am certain that it is (a “thing of the Spirit”), but neither can I be certain that it is not. I will simply withhold judgment. Meanwhile I will counsel that person with regard to the restrictions St. Paul imposes upon the use of this gift in the church. He will use it privately, not publicly without an interpreter ... He will not encourage others to seek the gift because Christians are to desire prophecy rather than tongues, and because in all authenticated cases it was not given to individuals seeking or even expecting it. I will also warn him about the abuse of the gift as in the case of the Corinthians lest he become “puffed up” as did many of them.⁸⁸

And finally, in due recognition of St. Paul’s advice to “desire Spiritual gifts” (I Corinthians 14:1) and “forbid not to speak with tongues” (14:39), the minister dare never flippantly belittle one’s particular gift, even though it may in fact be the least of all the gifts – tongues. As Walter J. Bartling in an exegetical study of I Corinthians 12:

When a glossolalist claims that this gift has opened him up to a life of joyful witness and has given new vitality to the highest gift of love, who am I to say he is deluding himself? “By their fruits shall ye know them.” “Now the fruit of the Spirit is love. Joy” (Ga 5:22) ... Never does Paul deny that this, too, can be a gift of the Spirit.⁸⁹

What It Offers Us

Do we need Renewal? There is no doubt that we as individual Christians will *never* as members of the *ecclesia militans* be sufficiently renewed. After the Holy Spirit sanctifies us in the broad sense, his ongoing work of sanctification in the broad sense will continue in us till Glory as an essential characteristic of Christian life (I Thessalonians 5:23). What the Charismatic

⁸⁷ Dr. Ted Jungkuntz, “Ministry to and by Lutheran Charismatics,” Excerpt from a lecture presented at the Chicago-Area Lutheran Charismatic Conference, May 31-June 2, 1974.

⁸⁸ Gerlach, “Glossolalia,” p. 249.

⁸⁹ Walter J. Bartling, “The Congregation of Christ – A Charismatic Body,” *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 40, No. 2, February 1969, p. 78.

Renewal offers to us as individuals is not a mandatory imposition of miraculous powers. But it offers us a fresh way to look at our ongoing renovation. It offers us a fresh way to see our water baptism as not just a one-shot bestowal of grace to be set on our bookshelves and consulted only when we need assurance of forgiveness in the Gospel, but as a bestowal of grace to be carried in our hip pockets and consulted for daily living constantly. Let no one misunderstand me – Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions have never faltered in proclaiming this practical use of our water baptism. But the Charismatic Renewal offers us a fresh ever-fresh and ever-practical baptismal covenant of grace. Erwin Prange explains that

The real issue in the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is not tongues or gifts or emotion but the Lordship of Christ. You can say that without commitment or response. This simply means that he saved you in the distant past and I hope to go to heaven in the vague and remote future. In the meantime I owe Christ only a symbolic and didactic reverence. He has no real claim on or part in my daily experience. Only by the Holy Spirit can I call Him Lord of my total life, body, soul and spirit for time and eternity. Tongues and the esoteric gifts of the Spirit may indeed be optional, but the Lordship of Jesus is not.

What does the Charismatic Renewal offer to us, collectively, as a synod and as individual churches? One theologian of our church body warns us against “dead orthodoxy.” His caution in content is strikingly similar to that of Erwin Prange.

We need to recognize that Satan is clever enough to shortcircuit the power line even of those who are orthodox, thus causing a power failure in the lives of individual Christians with the result that lights are dimmed and even extinguished. When that happens the warmth of agape love cools, the joy of being a Christian is dissipated, stewardship and evangelism begin to falter. Our record in one area or another indicates that we could be putting the power of the Spirit to more effective uses ... The church in our times need a charismatic movement, no question about that.⁹⁰

I recall hearing during my vicarage one of our pastors comment on a Pentecostal group of Christians something to the effect of, “Say what you will of their deficient doctrine – they sure love each other!” Observers of the movement around the world are forced to admit the same, even if they don’t wish to.

In the Pentecostal meeting the outsider may be obliged to recognize that the Pentecostal movement has discovered a cardinal biblical truth: “religion is a life to be lived in fellowship ... every person from the minister down to the lowliest member is called to exercise his gift” ... the priesthood of believers *within the congregation* is believed and attempted on a scale unparalleled, in our knowledge, in any other branch of the church ... If Pentecostalism has raised this *esse* in its acute form it may deserve our appreciation.⁹¹

John Kildahl notes the same in his objective report in speaking in tongues:

⁹⁰ Gerlach, “The Holy Spirit and the Charismatic Renewal,” p. 37.

⁹¹ Bruner, op. cit., p. 149.

We noted a tremendous openness, concern and care for one another ... they were with each other in spirit and physical presence, and the highest ethical mandates were a part of their camaraderie.⁹²

Such glowing descriptions of love and unity within a church are deserving of our envy. How many WELS pastors wouldn't conjure up visions of such unity only to resign themselves to the realization that the visions will never become reality? Hopefully, within their own parishes fewer than anyone would guess. Why not *harness* the gifts of the Spirit so the universal priesthood may become a reality in evangelism, stewardship, and our worship communities? By this I don't necessarily mean promoting tongues, visions, and prophecy, although some Lutheran congregations have successfully worked them into their confessional theology (barring unionistic inclinations). Let no Charismatic congregation intimidate us with sensational gifts which really lie at the lower end of the scale of priorities. The Holy Spirit has equipped us with all we need to be truly "charismatic." We have the Gospel in Word and Sacrament – and in their purity at that!

Our "Charismata"

A fitting place to end is in considering our own gift of grace from the Holy Spirit. Having just celebrated the authenticity of 125 years of grace, we want always to put such undeserved love in its proper perspective so that 125 more years of the same may follow. The particular gift of grace which stands out in most of our minds is fidelity to the Word and the true unity which goes hand in hand with it. No one among us denies that we in our sinful weaknesses should rightly claim only the antithesis of God's undeserved love. God's justice, the great leveler, put me on the same plane as the LCMS charismatics, the Pentecostal, or even the heathen, if I really believe that my "charismata" of true Confessionalism follows from the Holy Spirit's *undeserved* love and kindness.

This seemingly obvious truth must ever be borne in mind and in practice if we truly wish to avoid a *divisiveness* in the one body of Christ, and yet at the same time retain our distinct, scriptural and confessional character. An analogy might be drawn from the example of a local congregation torn apart by a few members who have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, subsequently manifested the gifts of tongues, then drawn the false conclusion that they must be superior to the rest of the Christian congregation. Such an example—and they are not all so—justifiably warrants that the label "divisive" be affixed to those "super Christians" and their own little "tongues movement."

Are we in the WELS guilty of the same? We claim that the official position of our synod is a doctrinal system totally aligned with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. We even claim this as our charismatic gift. But do we become "divisive" when we present ourselves to the Christian community as a "super church" and superior believers? If so, then this particular gift the holy Ghost has graciously bestowed upon WELS is useless in respect to our confession before the heterodox world. David Dorpat, the Lutheran charismatic, who calls Missouri's historic position on worship fellowship the "Lutheran Church -Missouri *Sin*," speaks of his past before he became involved in the Renewal: his confirmation classes

simply training in bigotry. They built walls. For instance, when pointing out our understanding of the Lord's Supper it was automatic to point out the "errors" of other denominations. "The methodists down the block don't believe in the Real Presence." I remember how terrible I thought that was. The methodists are

⁹² John P. Kildahl, *The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues*. New York: Harper & Rowe, 1972, pp. 83-84.

certainly inferior to us, I thought ... Our teaching about other Christians was completely negative.⁹³

Are we guilty of such divisiveness? We have to make it absolutely plain that we are not questioning the Christianity of any heterodox individual or church body to whom we are pointing out doctrinal aberration. The same holds true when we are conviction-bound to decline worship fellowship with other believers. Of course this is “obvious to the evangelical WELS minister.” But it’s not always so obvious to the erring fellow member of the Body of Christ. On the other hand, no pastor, WELS or otherwise, is deaf to the voice of the “different principle” (Romans 7:23) which appeals to his sinful pride, whispering, “He’s *less* a Christian than you.” We must decidedly reject the notion of identifying our church body, orthodox though it may be, with the *Una Sancta Ecclesia*. A pure doctrinal position, least of all, should give one cause to think himself a “better class” of Christian than the heterodox churchman down the road. That same confessional position demands of us that we admonish fellow Christians not divisively, but in a *loving* way.

At the same time we must make it absolutely plain that our love for our erring brother and our inerrant Word *both* demand of us that we make testimony, even to the point of refusing to fellowship with a *fellow* Christian, even when we are longing inside to do just that. It’s a crying shame if a WELS minister ever gives the impression that he doesn’t eagerly *desire* to worship together with another Christian. The founding fathers of both LCMS and WELS all expressed this same desire for *true* unity. Let this same loving concern to our fellow Christians exhibit itself both in humility and firm, unwavering conviction. This is the best way our “charismata” can be applied in grateful love for the Spirit who gives it.

⁹³ David M. Dorpat, “The Divisive Tongues Movement.” Position paper obtained from the author, pp. 2-3.

7. Conclusion

“The topic you are studying is not merely an academic one since we are seeking to know and do what pleases God in this matter.” So said one charismatic pastor in reply to the questionnaire. Generally, throughout the research I attempted to keep this in mind, as continually my presuppositions were challenged.

That I tackled the whole question with a certain bias need not be apologized. At the outset I indicated that my bias would be scripturally established, and therefore I (obviously) entertained a WELS bias because my conviction was and is that the latter altogether corresponds to the former in respect to the matter of worship fellowship. In this way I, too, must confess to begging the question. But can such circle logic—starting with Scripture and ending with Scripture—ever be displeasing to God? My Shepherd’s voice, again through the Bible, answers “no.”

On the other hand, the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal has also, in a way, *successfully* challenged my presuppositions with which I broached the matter. Scripture does not anymore allow me to raise criticism against certain articles in the Lutheran (which must ever be stressed) Charismatic system of theology. The question is not closed, however. No one’s conviction should be allowed to prevaricate, unheeded, from the perspicuity of God’s Divine Word, because of his own sin-tainted logic. Any reader is seriously invited to demonstrate to the writer where my scriptural insight has been deficient in one way or another. This seminarian in no way claims to be the final authority – only Scripture may claim that distinction.

One final question: Am I a charismatic? Yes, but not by any “Pentecostal” standards. I attach this label to myself only in the sense that truly *Lutheran* charismatics understand it. I have never spoken in tongues, conducted healing, or uttered prophesy (in the narrow sense) nor will I ever actively seek these specific gifts. The Spirit, as a mater of grace “blows where it (He) listeth” (John 3:5). But one happy outgrowth of working through this thesis has been a reevaluation of my relationship with the third person of the Trinity, not just with relation to His conversion activity but also to His *entire* work of sanctification in my life. The Lord has graciously seen to it that the blessings from this undertaking have greatly exceeded and *will* greatly exceed whatever I had hoped to gain from the outset of my journey into the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal.

Appendix A

Sent to LCMS charismatics

Rt. 2, #1004, Hwy 60
Cedarburg, WI 53012
March 4, 1977

Dear Pastor,

May I take a few minutes of your time to ask that you fill out the questionnaire below and return it in the enclosed envelope? I am a student at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and have chosen for my Church History thesis the topic of the Charismatic Renewal. This I've narrowed down to my thesis: Relationship between the Charismatic Renewal within the LCMS and fellowship principles of the LCMS. Since very little resource material is available on this subject, I've had to draw on personal contact for my major sources. Therefore, I'm sending this questionnaire to you, who can supply me with the information I seek.

Regarding the poll, feel free to make any comments which you might have on the individual questions. Space is given for comment.

Numbers eleven and twelve needn't be greatly detailed (although it would be appreciated). Just a brief recounting of major people, items of literature, and personal experiences which influenced your involvement in the Renewal will be satisfactory. Feel free to use the back of the questionnaire if you run out of room.

Your signature isn't necessary unless, of course, you wish it, I'm not interested in names, only facts. Let me assure you that anything you write will be kept in strictest confidence, certainly not to be used for any kind of incrimination. My thesis is not intended for publication.

Finally, I ask that you do not delay in filling out the questionnaire and returning it. I know this is coming at a busy time of the church year, so I beg your indulgence. But *tempus fugit*, especially before a due date, so I urge you to respond as quickly as possible.

If you have any other resource material which you could spare to give or lend (please specify so I will return it), it also, together with your valuable time spent on filling out this questionnaire, would be *most greatly appreciated*.

I thank you for your time and efforts.

Sincerely,

Scott J. Stone

Appendix B

59 were polled; 29 (52%) answered.

Questionnaire

1. Have you experienced the charismatic Baptism in the Holy Spirit?
Yes—100%
2. Do you regularly exhibit this Baptism in the Spirit through the gift of tongues? Prophecy? Healing?
Yes—86% Yes—59%
Yes—86%
(Several qualified “prophecy” in the wider sense.)
3. Have you led your congregation to seek this Baptism in the Holy Spirit?
Yes—86% (Several—“as individuals have desired it.”)
4. Could you say that another person or church body was influential in leading you to your convictions regarding the Baptism in the Spirit (beside the influence of the Spirit active within you)? *Yes-93%* A fellow member of the LCMS? *Yes-71%*
27% indicated influence both inside and outside LCMS
5. Before your personal experience with the Holy Ghost, did you have any contact with Pentecostals? *36%* With charismatics of other denominations, church bodies, synods, beside LCMS? *61%* If “yes,” which church bodies? *FGBMFI (24% of “yes” answers), Episcopal, R. C., Baptist, Jesus People, Presbyterian, Independent, LCA*
6. Did the above contact involve altar, pulpit, and prayer fellowship?
Yes-76% of “yes” answers in #5 (primarily prayer fellowship).
7. Do you now participate in altar, pulpit, and prayer fellowship with members (especially charismatic) of other church bodies beside LCMS? *86%* If “yes,” which church bodies? *(50% from “no” in #6 to “yes” in #7). LCA, ALC, FGBMFI, R. C., Presb., Meth., Bapt., Pent., Nazarene, 7th Day Adv., Assy. of God, Ch. of [?]*
8. Have your fellowship practices (i.e., worship) with any other denominations experienced a marked increase since your involvement in the Renewal? *Yes-57% (50% of the “no’s” answered “yes” to #5 and #6)*
9. Have you led your congregation into worship fellowship with charismatics of other denominations? *Yes-46%*
10. Do you believe the Charismatic Renewal to be a common bond unifying all Christian denominations, despite doctrinal differences? *Yes-71%*
The majority of “yes’s” added “as it centers on JX.” The majority of “no’s” expressed the same.
11. Have you had any problems with Synodical authorities? *11%* If “yes,” on the basis of charges of unionism? *100% (at least in part)* If “no,” on what basis?
12. Please give a short history of your beginnings in the Renewal.
13. Please give any advice or comments on my thesis topic.

Appendix C

Sent to WELS District Presidents

Rt. 2, #1004, Hwy 60
Cedarburg, WI 53012
March 3, 1977

Dear Pastor,

May I take a few minutes from your schedule to ask you a few questions? I'm a senior at the Seminary and have chosen for my Church History thesis the topic of the Charismatic Renewal. This I've narrowed down to my thesis: the relationship between the Charismatic Renewal within the LCMS and unionistic practices within the LCMS.

As part of my thesis, I will make conclusions and recommendations dealing with our own synod and the Charismatic Renewal. Therefore, I'm writing to ask you for information concerning how your district has dealt with the problem thus far, if in fact you've had cases of this nature.

What I'm looking for is this:

- 1) Short history of cases where the Charismatic Movement has broken out in your district, especially *how* the Renewal became an issue with any given congregation and/or minister.
- 2) Where disciplinary action was taken, what was the procedure?
- 3) In cases of suspension, what were the grounds for suspension?
- 4) If known, what became of the charismatic congregation (i.e., only the persons involved in the "Baptism in the Holy Spirit") and/or pastor after the suspension?
- 5) Any advice or comments you might have on my thesis topic.

I'm not too interested in knowing names, if you wish to keep information confidential. Any name facts you give me will be kept in strictest confidence. Great details aren't necessary either (although it would be appreciated)—just a brief accounting of how the problem crept in and how it was dealt with will suffice.

Finally, I ask that you do not delay too long in responding. I know this letter is coming at a busy time of the church year, so I beg your indulgence. But *tempus fugit*, especially before a due date, so please hurry.

If you have any other resource material which you could spare to give or lend (please specify so I will return it, it also, together with your valuable time spent in answering my questions would be most greatly appreciated.

I thank you for your time and efforts.

In our crucified Lord and Savior,

Scott J. Stone

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