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Theory and Practice of the Holy Spirit

ROSWITH GERLOFF

Theological theory is the theological articulation of practice. Hence theological theories must have their roots in real experience. They are related to the art of observing, sharing, interpreting, and communicating existential reality. Pneumatology (theory of the Holy Spirit) and spirituality are (even in linguistic terms) identical expressions of the same human experience or, preferably, complementary views of the same corporate and personal reality. Spirituality is pneumatology in action. Pneumatology is spirituality in reflection. Or one can say: pneumatology is the reflection of spiritual spontaneity. For the Spirit "blows where it wills; you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from, or where it is going. So with everyone who is born from spirit" (Jn. 3:8 NEB). And "the Spirit explores everything, even the depths of God's own nature... This is the Spirit that we have received from God, and not the spirit of the world, so that we may know all that God of his own grace has given us" (1 Cor. 2:10, 12 NEB).

It has been the catastrophe of traditional church life and theology, at least in Europe and the Western hemisphere, that these fundamental and existential roots—the discoveries of the real God in real life—have been widely neglected or even discarded as dangerous both for the church as an institutional community and for doctrinal formulation. With the exception of some streams in Eastern Orthodoxy and of the so-called heretical or sectarian movements throughout church history (which consequently were suppressed), it has been largely forgotten that only through the Spirit, the Paraclete, the comforter and advocate, is Christ made known to his community. Only through the Spirit are people reminded of him, guided into all truth, and thus liberated and liberating. One of the great insights opened up by modern historical-critical exegesis...
may work in and through us. At the same time Friends need to recover the life and power of prayer, personally and corporately, and re-learn how to live in the virtue and strength of that life and power to which George Fox and the early Friends testified in their experience with Christ and the inward life of the Spirit.

Although this is not the place to undertake it, Friends need to spell out a "theology of the Holy Spirit" which will provide a conceptual framework for this inward life of the Spirit we claim. I have tried to do this in a very minimal way in the "ESR Report" which appeared in Quaker Life for May, 1974. There reference was made to a number of issues which need to be explored and amplified. One more I would add now, namely, a full examination of Friends’ doctrine of Christian perfection, which provides an ethical framework and imperative for Quakerism as a movement of the Spirit.

Whether or not Friends are charismatic in the contemporary sense is of course a debatable question on which not all will agree. But Friends cannot very well deny the Spirit-centered and Spirit-led nature of Quakerism without abandoning that which is central and fundamental to their religious heritage and faith. Neither can they ignore the presence and reality of the movement of the Spirit in our time without doing violence to the very religious emphasis which gave rise to the Society of Friends in the first place. For these reasons we need to see the charismatic movement as a challenge and opportunity for Quaker renewal rather than a threat to our existence and way of life.

In the article referred to above, I have suggested that as Friends “we interpret the Holy Spirit as the real presence and transforming power of God and of the living Christ, working in our midst.” Likewise Lewis Benson has written, “For Fox, a gospel that does not bring men to the experience of the power of God is no gospel. ‘The gospel of truth,’ Fox says, ‘is but one, which is the power of God, and there is no other!’” It is for this reason that God is not dead but alive for authentic Quaker-
pneumatology which is freed from notional language to reflect of spontaneity. But certainly these movements can help us to understand the hunger of modern man for experiencing something which is real in his heart and mind and not a mere rational argument. In exercising “pneumatological reality,” they can make us aware of the immense freedom of God’s Spirit to work in ways and means hitherto unknown to traditional Western theology. Biblical historical-critical research, valid and enlightening as it is, cannot replace existential experience. But certainly it can provide us with a deeper understanding of early Christian reality and through scientific investigation show models of different expressions of different experiences in different historical contexts.

We need a pneumatological theory which gives fresh articulation to a living and diverse spirituality — an open theology that does not lament the contradictions or the absence of spiritual experience, but with open ears and humble minds searches for the kingdom of God.

THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

Practice and activity of the Spirit can (and should) be traced in manifold aspects of human life and thought — in the growing awareness of a much deeper pneumatological dimension in Eastern Orthodox theology; in the openness to the Spirit’s operations outside the established churches, where freedom and dignity of human beings is at stake; in the struggles for liberation from oppressive and dominating structures; in the experimental attempts to turn Christian churches into open communities for others; in the discovery of the work of the Spirit in other religions and faiths; in the experience of its dynamic power in indigenous cultures and human artistic creativity. These aspects, as different as they are, have three things in common: first, the freedom and sovereignty of the Holy Spirit that “blows where it wills”; second, the presence and energy of the Holy Spirit as something to be experienced — heard, seen, or felt, bodily and existentially; third, the concept of the Holy Spirit as dynamic power that enters into man and men’s history and seizes and transforms earthly life.

Or, as some would put it, they have not been truly baptized with the Holy Spirit. Division may also arise when speaking in tongues is regarded as a miraculous language which requires translation and for which only certain persons are qualified to do the interpreting. Charismatics are just as prone to arrogance as other Christians, and sometimes this arrogance becomes oppressive to those who either have not experienced the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the same way or have genuine doubts about it.

The intent of this article is not to argue for the charismatic movement in all its varied aspects or to argue that one must experience and exhibit certain manifestations of it to be an authentic Christian. Rather, the intent is to gain a greater tolerance and broader understanding of the movement of the Spirit in our time which, I believe, has something in common with the deepest movements of the Spirit in the Society of Friends. The plea is to see this in its broadest context and to see it as related to the historic quaking and prophetic elements of Quakerism. If we as Friends could see it in that light, then it might not seem so strange, alien, and offensive.

The point might also be made that it is rather odd that Friends, as a movement of the Spirit, have paid so little attention in their history to those portions of Scripture which deal with the gifts of the Spirit, especially 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4. Friends are often so enamored on and moved by 1 Corinthians 13 that they overlook the larger context in which this great chapter on love is set, namely, Paul’s fullest treatment of the gifts of the Spirit, including speaking in tongues. Although Paul expresses some cautions and preference about this particular gift, nevertheless he does not denounce it but asserts that it is one of the ways in which the Spirit manifests itself in the Christian community (1 Cor. 14:5, 18).

Quaker renewal today calls for a recovery of the power and leading of the Holy Spirit. This also calls for less defensiveness about how and in what way the Spirit of the Lord
ings. Although there is very little, if any, trace of it in Quaker history (which cannot be said of spiritual healing), there are contemporary manifestations of speaking in tongues appearing in certain places. How much of this is authentic to Friends’ ways of worship and religious expression and how much of it is influenced by pentecostal and charismatic stirrings in the environs of Friends is still not clear.

Although I have never experienced speaking in tongues and am not an advocate of it as essential to the Christian life, I am somewhat surprised and astonished at the fear which overcomes many Friends when the matter comes up. Part of this is due to unfamiliarity with it and fear of any strange or out-of-the-ordinary religious expression. If one could study comparatively this aspect of the charismatic movement with the Quaker phenomenon and experience of “quaking in the power of the Lord or of the Spirit,” I believe that we might discover surprising similarities and parallels between the two.

Glossolalia is not necessarily as bizarre and unusual as some believe it to be. Like quaking in the power of the Spirit it may occur as an individual or group phenomenon. Contrary to popular opinion, speaking in tongues is not fundamentally a “foreign language” but constitutes syllables which are either spoken or sung. Singing or chanting in tongues is basically a form of prayer and praise to God or it may be a form of intercession for others. It is not so much an extraordinary or miraculous gift as it is a way of worship and prayer. It usually takes the form of joyful celebration, which may offend the sobriety of some Quaker worshipers, but that is not to say that it is phony or does not have validity for others. Glossolalia can be and often is a form of prayer which lifts oneself or the group up to God in a desire to be made one with him and to receive his blessing in return.

The factor of divisiveness seems to enter when those who claim this special gift of the Spirit become over-zealous in their claims for it or insist that those who do not exhibit it have not truly experienced the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

We can deal here with only one striking aspect of recent church history, which in its first instance struck traditional theology as “sectarian,” so that its phenomena were largely ignored. This development later forced church leaders and academic theologians into controversial interpretations. We speak of the pentecostal and charismatic movements which arose in the beginning of this century but remained either unrecognized or “excommunicated” for approximately sixty years. Henry P. Van Dusen, the American theologian, pointed as early as 1955 (after a journey to the Caribbean and an encounter with native pentecostal churches) to Pentecostalism as “the third mighty arm of Christian outreach” besides Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, and to its phenomenal growth. Although his definition of Pentecostalism was still rather imprecise, he challenged traditional Western theology by his definition of the term “fringe sects”:

“Fringe?” On the fringes of what? Of our sects, to be sure, of ecumenical Protestantism. But on the “fringe” of authentic Christianity, of the true church of Christ? That is by no means so certain, especially if the measuring-rod is kinship of thought and life with original Christianity, to which we all go back proudly as progenitor and in some sense norm. Many of its marks are strikingly, unmistakably, undeniably reproduced in this “new Christianity,” as they were in historic “sectarian Protestantism” in its beginnings:

Spiritual ardor, sometimes but by no means always with excessive emotionalism.

Immediate experience of the living Christ, sometimes with aberrations.

Intimate and sustaining fellowship, sometimes with excess.

Leading of the Holy Spirit, sometimes but by no means always with exaggerated claims.

Intense apocalypticism, just like the early church, but hardly more extreme than what is the current vogue in some segments of respectable contemporary ecumenical Protestantism.
Above all, a life-commanding, life-transforming, seven-day-a-week devotion, however limited in outlook, to a living Lord of all life.

The history of twentieth-century Pentecostalism is a most exciting and embarrassing story, full both of hopes and promises and of failures and conflicts. It is the story of people, mainly among the underprivileged, who felt the power of a liberating spirit that called them out from social and emotional oppression into freedom of body, mind, and soul—a freedom such as the children of Israel experienced when they were called from Egyptian slavery into the open wilderness. But many of them, especially the whites, could not stand this situation, were not satisfied with “manna from heaven” (continuing new discoveries), but soon adjusted to the social pattern of respectable society. As so often in history, the dynamic spirit had to enter the notional abstractions of a rational doctrine and the institutional structures of a stabilized organization. The “first love” died away or at least became locked up behind the boundaries of class, race, or denomination. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that in the rise of Pentecostalism there was something which carried with itself the message of the spirit's real fascination and which is still present today in large movements in the so-called third world. Walter Hollenweger writes:

The Pentecostal movement originated in the year 1906 in a simple black church in Los Angeles. W. J. Seymour, the minister of the congregation, was a descendant of the African slaves who had been shipped to America. The first Pentecostal meeting place was a disused Methodist chapel with sawdust strewn on the floor; the pews were planks resting on wooden boxes. The leader of this revival was no great orator. It was his custom to pray from behind his pulpit which consisted of two packing cases nailed together, his head bowed and his face covered with his hands, his elbows resting on the pulpit top. Yet that congregation in Azusa Street, Los Angeles, was the starting point for a Pentecostal movement which today embraces between fifteen and thirty-five million charismatic movement, but do they explain why evangelical Quakerism has been equally skeptical and sometimes threatened by it? One could even say that in some cases the religious manifestations of fundamentalist and revivalistic Friends are even more extreme than many Pentecostal meetings which one may observe in this country and abroad. The Spirit has been reported to do some strange things in Friends revival meetings! And yet there runs through evangelical Quakerism (as through evangelical Christianity in general) a strong rationalistic strain which wants to keep religious experience within the bounds of reason and which expounds a logic of its own. This is the reason for concern over sound doctrine and for the belief that the essence of Christianity can be articulated in statements of faith and belief. Evangelical Quakerism (perhaps like liberal Quakerism) has developed a religious culture of its own which also wants to “play it safe” by keeping its religious practices within the bounds of proper control, which sometimes means under the control of persons in key leadership positions.

Perhaps there is also in both kinds of Quakerism (and all those who place themselves somewhere in between) a historic Quaker preoccupation with religious dignity, order, and decorum. Anything which brings this into doubt and exceeds the bounds of propriety and the status quo usually meets with resistance. Here again Friends are inclined to caution and playing it safe with respect to new movements of the Spirit all about us.

When all is said and done, however, perhaps the greatest fear and lack of acceptance by Friends, both liberal and evangelical, is expressed over the phenomena of glossolalia (speaking in tongues) and to a lesser degree the spiritual healing movement. The latter has gained considerable acceptance and credibility in certain quarters, for example, in the otherwise staid atmosphere of London Yearly Meeting. But speaking in tongues seems too far out and frightening to the majority of Friends. It has sometimes become the source of misunderstanding and division where it has been exhibited in Friends meet-
Now why should all this be such a bothersome issue for Friends? After all, Friends have claimed to be a movement of the Spirit (and of the Light) from the beginning. For Friends both the Spirit and the Light were centered in and identified with Christ; this placed them clearly within the Christian tradition. Moreover, Friends claimed to be concerned with "primitive Christianity revived." They claimed to experience in early Quakerism the same power of the Holy Spirit that moved the early Christian community. So why would Friends be fearful or doubtful about manifestations of the Spirit which have such close associations with the beginnings of the Quaker movement, especially when Friends often speak hopefully of recovering today something of the power and zeal of their founding fathers?

Part of the answer to this question is that even though the "Spirit motif" has clearly been present in the Society of Friends from the start, the parallel "Light motif" has often tended toward a rationalistic and humanistic strain within Quakerism. It has claimed to be rooted in firsthand religious experience and drew its religious source from the Johannine writings of the New Testament. In more recent times, however, it has relied less on its biblical origins and has tended to be cautious and skeptical about religious enthusiasm and eccentric manifestations of the Spirit, such as some of the various forms of "ranterism" which have plagued Quakerism from the beginning.

Another part of the answer to this question is that Friends have more and more wanted to "play it safe" and "be respectable" in the eyes of the world. If one becomes responsive to the power and leading of the Holy Spirit there is no telling what strange things may happen, even as they did happen in early Quakerism. The power of the Spirit is bound to break loose the structures of traditionalism and liberate those who have been subject to various kinds of bondage.

Perhaps these are reasons enough why liberal Quakerism has been cautious about the religious enthusiasm of the members. Seekers from all over the world flocked to Los Angeles and there they found "the well-spring of spiritual life" and received a decisive impulse toward their ministry. It was justly said by the English Anglican minister, the Reverend Alexander A. Boddy, that "it was unheard of for white preachers from the southern states to be so eager to visit Negroes in Los Angeles, to share fellowship with them and by their prayers and intercessions to receive the same blessings as they had received." And Frank Bartleman, an eyewitness at that first revival, proudly affirmed that in Los Angeles "the color line was washed away in the blood."

This is highly significant. The early pentecostal revival was an ecumenical, interracial, inter-class movement, cutting across the barriers of denomination, color, social prestige — across all sorts of "propositional" rationalizations. As was rightly said by Bishop Morris Golder, one of the black American pentecostal leaders: "The Pentecostals — if they would have presented a solid front, taking a firm stand and risking their lives, as Martin Luther King did — they would have been tremendously effective spiritually, socially, and politically." "Spiritual history" means a history in which the dynamic activity of the Spirit is to be observed, shared, and interpreted. If one dares to speak in such terms, then one may draw the conclusion that Pentecostalism did not just accidentally arise at the threshold of a century so full of racism, oppression of man's dignity, and destruction of the human mind. Leonard Lovett of the Charles Harrison Mason Theological Seminary in Atlanta — a member of the Church of God in Christ — emphasizes this:

Seymour, the one-eyed unattractive apostle of Pentecost from Houston, Texas, defied the racist mentality of his time and opened the revival to everyone, a factor of supreme importance in explaining the success of the revival. . . . Not only did blacks initiate the Azusa Street meeting which is now recognized as a "watershed" in Pentecostal
history, but for many years maintained interracial ties during a crucial period in the history of American race relations. Black liberation affirms with dogmatic insistence that liberation is always the consequence of the presence of the Spirit. Authentic liberation can never occur apart from genuine pentecostal encounter, and likewise, authentic pentecostal encounter cannot occur unless liberation becomes the consequence. It is another way of saying no man can experience the fullness of the Spirit and be a bona fide racist.

It is apparent that this is why Pentecostalism spread like a fire from the United States to Europe and, most important, to the poor in the world, to the oral cultures of Latin America, Africa, and Indonesia. Not only did its living liturgy, its spontaneity, its charismatic structures, its unprogrammed meetings attract otherwise uneducated people. Not only, instead of just talking about poverty, did these movements work with the poor and develop patterns of communal life, responsibility, and leadership. But first and foremost, “black” stood here for all the oppressed, for the “community of the hurt”; and “pentecostal” stood for the authentic faith of those who were genuinely liberated by the Spirit of God. Thus far its universal impact has not reached its peak.

The controversial question, of course, arises because in recent research it has become undeniably obvious that American Pentecostalism and charismatic upheaval is partly rooted in its Negro culture, in its rediscovery of African and Afro-American elements. The “authentic black experience,” the genuinely black theology (and pneumatology), for which black theologians of liberation search so urgently, already exist — in the mode of life of the underground of American literary theology. White American Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism, at least since 1915, have deceived the “Spirit’s ingenuity” by their segregating policies and racist attitudes, which corresponded to the racial pattern of North American society. They consciously-unconsciously suppressed their origin and early sources. Black pentecostal churches developed freely and without recognition

The Charismatic Movement -- Threat or Challenge to Friends?

WILMER A. COOPER

Among the many contrasts which can be drawn between the turbulence of the 1960’s and the relative calm of the 1970’s is the fact that ten years ago the “God is dead” movement was in the ascendancy whereas now the charismatic movement, together with a variety of bizarre religious cults, are in the ascendancy. However one assesses these movements, they would seem to be in reaction to the secularization tendencies of the modern era. Oddly enough the churches have been most challenged, and sometimes threatened, by the charismatic movement (which is a movement of the Spirit) and the Jesus revolution (with its emphasis on “Jesus is coming back”). The purpose of this article is to examine the challenge and threat of the charismatic movement to the Society of Friends.

“Charismatic” is a broad term used today which has its primary roots in the Pauline letters of the New Testament. There it is related to spirit (pneuma) and grace (charis) and often takes on characteristics of the ecstatic and miraculous. It is to be identified with post-Easter Christianity manifesting the pentecostal power and enthusiasm of the early church. Today “charismatic” is a general term applied to many movements of the Spirit, including denominational Pentecostalism, neo-Pentecostalism in the mainline churches, and almost any movement concerned with the gifts of the Spirit. Unfortunately the “gifts” have too often been restricted to prophecy, healing, and speaking in tongues (glossolalia) and have not taken into account Paul’s broader concern for other gifts of the Spirit, not to speak of his concern for the fruits of the Spirit, especially that of love.
Because of the continuing presence of Christ, the Quaker doctrine of the Holy Spirit is different. The Spirit brings people to Christ and shows them who he is. Fox's statement that "the Father of Life drew me to his Son by his Spirit" illustrates this. A similar biblical quotation is from 1 Corinthians 12:3 (RSV): "And no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit."

Fox never thinks of God without thinking of Christ and the Spirit. It is unfortunate that Quakers seem to have largely lost this belief and experience of the continuing presence of Christ. It was the source of their remarkable spiritual power and made them the most Christ-centered of any Christian group. It produced their unprogrammed worship, their meetings for business, and their belief that it is possible through the power of the living Christ to know and do the will of God in this life. The hope is that this present situation will change and Friends will be enabled to proclaim again that Christ has come to teach his people himself.

by respectable non-charismatic and charismatic Christianity, but naturally had no access to academic research on their own history, to financial resources, or to theological institutions. Thus their oral culture of songs and stories, parables and visionary hopes of freedom was preserved but was ignored by modern progressive and conservative evangelical theologies. And what was declared as genuine "Pentecostalism" was only the white, conceptual, abstract, fundamentalist rationalization of it — the categorical system of two- or three-stage crisis-experiences, which had historical roots in a certain interpretation of Luke's theology, in certain streams within historical Roman Catholicism, and in the Wesleyan explanation of holiness. This form of notional language nevertheless flooded the North American, European, West Indian, Latin American, and South African "pentecostal" market. James Tinney, teacher of black studies at Kansas University, himself white, makes a rather ironical statement: "Is it not strange that no one has inquired about the origin of the black Pentecostal bodies? Evidently popular assumption has it that the gift of tongues fell spontaneously and separately on the non-glossolalist black and white churches. However, this is far from the truth." He goes on to say that acknowledgment of the fact that Pentecostalism developed on the black scene and became a contribution of the ghetto to the Christian nation at large would have startling implications:

First, since scholars consider some elements of Pentecostalism to resemble closely the early Church, primitive Christianity is not foreign to the experience of American Negroes and hence is not totally a white imposition. Second, while it is true that whites have tended to impose certain aspects of a culturized religion on black churches, it is also true that blacks have given to more than a million whites a religious form that is significantly Afro-American. Third, since isolated incidents of glossolalia have appeared and disappeared at regular intervals in church history, it is not unreasonable to suggest that without the important role of blacks, there might be no Pentecostal movement
of any magnitude today in the United States or the world. Fourth, the ecumenical and interracial factors inherent in Pentecostalism may offer mainstream Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant, some direction in building a truly integrated church.

From here three theological issues have to come under urgent review. The first one is the tragic marriage between fundamentalism as a notional, rational language and Pentecostalism as a living liturgy and a spiritual witness within an oral-associative tradition. In fact, evangelical theology, with its individualistic hermeneutics and its social and political conservatism, has acted as the worst enemy of authentic liberation of the fullness of humanity. As Bishop Monroe Saunders from the First United Church of Jesus Christ in Baltimore said to me: "Where white Pentecostalism has been trapped by rigid fundamentalism, it necessarily will fail. Manna stinks when you preserve it. But fresh manna every day — this is Pentecost! Jesus Christ is a cosmic figure and his spirit is free, liberating, leading us into a whole experience."

The second question refers to the preoccupation with the tongues-phenomena inside and outside of historical Pentecostalism. Glossolalia, a "meditative, non-rational form of prayer," highly appreciated by Paul for private prayer and used under certain conditions in the worship of the early church (1 Cor. 14), was totally rejected by established Christianity as being "unlawful" and "enthusiastic." Pentecostals therefore had to make a virtue out of necessity — to make a narrow doctrine out of a life-experience. Speaking in tongues as the "initial evidence" of "Holy Ghost baptism" became the only distinctive sign of "deeper depths and higher heights," of the real presence of a dynamic power in the service of the church. Where charismatic and pentecostal experience was never influenced by these rationalizations, speaking in tongues is still highly regarded and greatly appreciated as a spiritual gift but not as the essential sign of the outpouring of the Spirit. This is the case among African independent charismatic move-
Christ and the Holy Spirit: The Earliest Quaker View
JOHN H. CURTIS

The turning point in the life of George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, came when he heard a voice which said, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition."

Fox had lost all hope of finding help from men. Then he heard this voice. It changed him from a seeker to a finder. He devoted his life to proclaiming by word and deed the glorious good news that "Christ was come to teach his people himself."

This is quite clear from his Journal. Anyone reading it with the purpose of determining whether or not Fox really means Christ when he says Christ will come to the conclusion that he does indeed mean Christ.

Why then has this view of Christ almost completely disappeared from present-day Quakerism?

I believe that there are two causes. The first is an attempt to interpret Quakerism in comparison with orthodox Christianity. The belief of orthodox Christianity that is most pertinent here is that Christ was born, died, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sent the Holy Spirit to take his place on earth until his second coming.

This is a change from Fox's view that God draws man to the ever-present Christ by the Spirit. In effect Christ is replaced by the Spirit. This changed view was expressed by some Quakers in the seventeenth century. For instance, Robert Barclay in his Apology almost always speaks of the Spirit and almost never speaks of the living presence of Christ. This is a view which is congenial to many Friends today.

The second cause is the reinterpretation of Quakerism in terms of philosophical mysticism that was undertaken at the movements and in indigenous churches of the West Indies and Latin America.

The third area to come under review should therefore be the thorough, comparative study of our usual concept of penta-costal pneumatology with those of indigenous charismatic movements which are not of North American white heritage. It can well be called a catastrophe that, for quite obvious reasons, there has been only a one-way traffic from white America to Europe and the countries of the poor. Africans do not write at all; Latin Americans use Spanish or Portuguese for their expositions. The biblical exegetical discoveries on the European continent were a hidden world for academically untrained people. Greater economic power, together with conscious American missionary zeal, indoctrinated churches whose practical pneumatology was much more dynamic than any of the doctrinal statements imposed on them. Even the Neo-Pentecostals, both within Protestantism and, to a lesser degree, within Roman Catholicism, appear to have uncritically taken over categories which, with better biblical insight, they could easily have refused. The entire phenomenon can best be studied in the West Indian pentecostal churches — many of them still dependent on white American declarations and centralized organizations — whose formulated doctrines do not match their living liturgy, their spontaneous witness, and their corporate commitment.

Hence the question, as I see it, is still how theological theory can be the theological articulation of practice, how it becomes an instrument to give ever-fresh articulation to diverse spirituality, how it can provide a pneumatology which reflects on spontaneity. One step would be to stop dismissing story, song, testimony, dance, dream, communal life-styles, social actions, as unimportant for the theological-pneumatological discourse. It is still possible that Pentecostalism may "develop into a really proletarian church, which not only gives a biblical articulation to the suffering of the underprivileged but also creates a Christian hope which can evolve in shaping a genuine poor people's theology, a post-literary liturgy, a
Another step would be to broaden our understanding of the biblical dimensions of the Spirit by paying particular attention to Paul and to his teaching on the *charismata*. I wish to enlarge on this second step. Paul seems to offer us a unique pneumatology, which is truly and admirably pneumatology in action—and that means spirituality in reflection.

**THE CHARISMATA IN PAUL’S WRITINGS**

Paul’s teaching on the *charismata* or gifts of the Spirit has long been an almost forgotten biblical dimension. It is a way of reflecting on spontaneous and corporate expressions of the Christian faith which did not easily fit into the conceptual language of propositional theology. Hence it either was watered down into the limited doctrine of seven or nine spiritual gifts, existing in a certain hierarchical order, or it had to give way altogether to a less dangerous manner of describing the manifestations of the Spirit and the ministry of Christians. The thorough investigations by Eduard Schweizer and Ernst Käsemann have thrown light on pneumatological practice and theory in early Christianity—light which uncovered meaning in the interdependence, response, and freedom of those filled with the Spirit (and the vulnerable structures of their communities) and which also opened up new horizons for the fresh interpretation of contemporary experience. It is certain that Paul himself did not merely develop a theory of the presence of the Spirit which he afterwards imposed on the newly founded congregations, but that he rather discovered spiritual reality among them and then reflected on already existent phenomena. He truly started from the quickening and driving fascination by the Spirit in the midst of people’s lives, tried to follow up its signs in early Christian congregations, and developed a pneumatological theory which had its roots in spontaneous participation and in an order of mutual assistance. And to describe this reality he introduced the word *charisma* into theology. He unfolded it in an open theology that can also be used as an acceptable instrument for interpret-

Hand, and human spirit (the dimension of depth or self-transcendence), on the other. Thus neither feeling nor the analytical mind is the dominant or controlling factor in the liturgy but rather the reality of the Spirit of God addressing the human spirit.

11. Cf. Mark 10:15 (and parallels) on receiving the kingdom of God as a little child; also 2 Kings, chap. 5, the account of Naaman the Syrian, who was required to wash in the muddy waters of the Jordan in order to receive healing.

12. In the secular-psychological context of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis the "letting go" motif is basic. If the client insists on censoring his thoughts and his speech, the therapist has little access to the person’s repressed experiences and the realm of the unconscious. The therapist often encourages the client to "let go" and discover the powers of life emerging within. The operative assumption is that reality is such that it tends toward integration and wholeness. By trying too hard to become whole, the client may only impede the healing process. Some therapists and sensitivity group trainers, however, have perhaps over-reacted to our cultural bias in favor of control, and exhibit in their work a prejudice against clear ideas, conscience, will, and the analytical mind. My own position is that the individual must discover a balance between head and heart, mind and body, objectivity and subjectivity. Significantly, orthodox Christian theology has consistently held that the balancing, harmonizing, or centering of one’s life is found outside of the self. It is realized only in the entrusting of oneself to God.

a few classical Pentecostals, for example, have in recent years come to a new appreciation of liturgical worship, and Catholics are increasingly open to silence in public worship. Or it might be that for some people in our culture speaking in tongues represents a more decisive break with the hegemony of the church and thus opens the way to spiritual growth beyond what has previously been experienced.

Notes
2. From what little I have been able to learn about the phenomenon of quaking among Friends, one apparently has less control over the practice than does the one speaking in a tongue, and one cannot necessarily terminate the practice at will.
3. It is at this point that Quakers remain understandably cautious and choose for themselves utterly simple surroundings for worship. Their fear is that one can be so captivated by external form and beauty that worship will remain on the level of the aesthetic. This has been perhaps a necessary corrective within the total life of the church and reflects an austerity not unlike the Old Testament prohibition against making graven images. At its worst, however, Quaker worship sometimes suggests a Gnostic-like repudiation of the rich beauty and vitality of creation and of our somatic existence.
4. On the other hand, the fixed quality of the liturgy can be used to insulate from real change. In this case the regularity of the liturgy imprisons rather than frees the person. But it could be argued that roughly the same insulating effect can take place in Quaker silent worship and in glossolalic worship. Rather than using the silence to center down into a creative openness to the leading of the Spirit, the Quaker worshipper may simply become drowsy or retreat into a kind of numb withdrawal from reality. Likewise, glossolalic speech may be employed in a given situation to escape from a more reflective understanding of God's will or a specific decision of the will to be obedient to God's leading.
5. Although I have been greatly helped by Romano Guardini in The Spirit of the Liturgy (1935), I cannot fully agree with him that thought is dominant over feeling in the liturgy. To be sure, as he argues, emotion in the liturgy generally is "controlled and subdued" (p. 129), but I have difficulty with his statement: "The heart speaks powerfully, but thought at once takes the lead" (p. 129). The more accurate contrast, I believe, is that between thought and feeling, on the one
ticular share which the individual has in grace, in the Spirit of Christ, to be practiced by him in his personal way.

In this way life is understood as diversified unity, as the fullness of the blessings of the Spirit given to us, in which we all participate through different experiences in different situations, so that “there is indeed no single gift you lack” (1 Cor. 12:7 NEB). According to Käsemann, Paul distinguishes between many forms of ministry: ministries of kerygma or proclamation — apostles, prophets, teachers, admonishers; gifts of inspiration, ecstasy, and interpretation; ministries of diaconia or service — deacons and deaconesses, giving, visiting, helping by charity or assistance, performing miraculous healing and exorcism; kybernetic or guiding ministries — those who direct the community, leaders, pastors, bishops, elders, administrators; gifts of wisdom, knowledge, and the discernment of spirits; and charismatic suffering, the solidarity of the charisma, described in 1 Corinthians 12:7-13 as the weakness and indigence of those who have been made a spectacle to the whole universe. It is highly significant that parallel to extraordinary functions are listed the ordinary ones, technical and lower services, which are marked as gifts of equal importance and quality. Because charisma is the individuality of one and the same Spirit distributed to each man — as the Lord has called him (1 Cor. 7:17) — even married and celibate, circumcised and uncircumcised, slave and free man can be named among the vocations. Any human condition can be transformed into a situation of truly spiritual encounter which is the very offering of ourselves, the “living sacrifice” responding to the gift granted to us (Rom. 12). Hence official functions in the community are exercised side by side with Christian principles and private virtues.

In Paul’s interpretation, Pentecost is a deeply humane, extremely awakening, intensely Christocentric vision. It corresponds to Ezekiel’s dream of the field of dry bones that were gathered together, covered with flesh and skin, and made alive by the spirit of prophecy (Ezek. 37). No human condition, no talent, no manifestation of life that cannot become transparent environment. Moreover, as many today have increasingly lost faith in a transcendent God and in the reality of the resurrection of the dead, death is no longer seen as a rite of passage to fuller life, but rather as a confrontation with nothingness and the abyss and as the final loss of self-control. To let go in a world without God is to risk chaos and the destruction of the self.

It is not surprising that the church has been influenced, by this cultural framework and has also come to be wary of the loss of control, especially as this occurs in religious ecstasy. One of the few writers who addressed himself directly and consistently to this issue was the late Paul Tillich. He contended that the church “must avoid the secular profanization of contemporary Protestantism which occurs when it replaces ecstasy with doctrinal or moral structure.” Indeed, Tillich viewed the entire Part IV of his Systematic Theology, entitled “Life and the Spirit,” as “a defense of the ecstatic manifestations of the Spiritual Presence against its ecclesiastical critics.” The church’s strongest weapon in this battle is the New Testament in its entirety. But, Tillich continues, “this weapon can be used legitimately only if the other partner in the alliance — the psychological critics — is also rejected or at least put into proper perspective.” But Tillich perhaps sensed how easy it would be to misuse these words, for he also insists that structure as well as ecstasy is needed in the church, and “the church must prevent the confusion of ecstasy with chaos.”

Tillich’s comments cannot, of course, be used to validate glossolalia or other charismatic phenomena in the church. At the very least, however, they might encourage greater openness to such experiences among non-charismatics and also a more sustained attempt to understand these phenomena in relation to the totality of the church’s thought and worship.

If there is an underlying functional similarity between glossolalia, Quaker silent worship, and traditional liturgical worship, as we have been suggesting, why have so many Catholics and Episcopalians and a smaller number of Friends sought and experienced glossolalia? Perhaps these three types of religious practice can complement and build upon each other. Not
from deeper as long as we insist on keeping full control we cut ourselves off primarily as the ability to gain power over and control one's Bacon, Descartes, Leibniz, and others.

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There appears to be a principle of the spiritual life that as long as we insist on keeping full control we cut ourselves off from a deeper relationship with God. Apparently for many individuals a seemingly foolish or ridiculous action is required in order to be released for a genuine spiritual breakthrough. Parenthetically, I would want to add, however, that not every foolish act or belief is valuable. Perhaps it is just foolish.

From time immemorial, saints and mystics have witnessed to the fact that a certain letting go, a being open to, is a necessary requirement for deeper experiences of the presence and power of God. But such a letting go is not easy for those of us today who have been profoundly influenced by Francis Bacon, Descartes, Leibniz, and others who viewed knowledge primarily as the ability to gain power over and control one's

for spiritual reality! No distinction between the exceptional and the normal, the profane and the sacred, the natural and the supernatural, the miraculous and the intelligent gifts! They all, diverse and even contradictory, exist side by side, deeply intertwined, most necessary as complements and corrections to one another. They are the human-spiritual expressions of a holistic life in Christ, and they allow an ad hoc theology which gives full liberty in a given situation.

From a thorough exploration of Paul's letters we can draw some conclusions. The first and foremost is that this concept of the charismata is utterly Christocentric in the way that it creates personal, corporate, visible, practical responsibility in the community of all vocations. Second, the community of the Spirit is a given fact, not a man-made idea, not invented but discovered as the body of Christ. It is that sphere, that part of the world which has admitted to the lordship of Christ and is driven by the power of his resurrection. The church's spirit is the antithesis of spiritual inwardness. It is the dynamic and gracious power of the risen Christ in our embodied lives. It is intensely interlaced with the structures of the present world, which only by its force will be liberated and transformed. Its members are those who bodily, mentally, and emotionally become involved in everyday-life devotion, because they attain their full humanity — grace, freedom, and togetherness. Third, the community of the Spirit is signaled in the worship of the congregation, as the different gifts and conditions lead to love and communication. True worship, as expressed in the spontaneity of songs, instructions, stories, parables, visions, ecstatic utterances, and the interpretation of such utterances (1 Cor. 14:26), is the dialogue of the charismata, is the ability to communicate with one's fellow men and thus to participate in God's diverse unity, which is in fact his commitment to peace and justice and his special concern for those who are oppressed and expelled. It is the demonstration of the new order of spiritual generosity toward everybody and hence of sharing the goods of the earth. It is the training field or playground for open liturgies which apply the different

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gifts to different situations, in which each can exercise his or her charisma with open ears and humble minds.

The Christian community is therefore charismatic or ecstatic—or nothing at all. Far from uniformity and rationalizations, the faithful step out into the realm of freedom, reflect the dialogue of the charismata, and transcend themselves by the Spirit’s quickening and driving fascination. “Charismatic” for that reason means the way of taking seriously the different gifts, shares, conditions, and vocations as means of mutual service. It describes the liberty to face limits, but to regard those limits as open gates to enrichment and fuller understanding. It emphasizes the commitment to give up all imperalistic, superior attitudes as over against people of different thoughts, behaviors, systems, and cultures. It stresses the power given to us in demythologizing the demons of isolation, oppression, and segmentation. It points to the dialogue of human beings in which alone we can encounter truth.

CONCLUSIONS

Pneumatology, we said, is the reflection of spiritual spontaneity, of the charismatic power in which we face each other as participants in the same reality here and now. It links us with the biblical dimension of the Spirit and its charismata. It has come to us again through the songs and visions, dreams and actions of an oral culture which, in our society and church, we have ignored and despised as unsuitable for doing proper theology. The Spirit, working dynamically with people in human history, has always been free enough to leave the “sacred” places of ecclesiastical institutions and doctrinal formulations. In its historical operations it is not—and never was—locked behind the doors of white supremacy. Its presence is where people suffer, strive for freedom, and hunger for universal communication. Its presence is where the same opportunity is given to non-verbal as to verbal expressions; where democratization of language and spiritual-political alphabeticization takes place; where fluid, flexible structures—forms of organization difficult to suppress—are developed; where charismatic (rather than bureaucratic) leadership springs from

“BECAUSE IT’S FUN”

People frequently ask: “But what is the value of speaking in tongues?” One simple response is: “Because it’s a lot of fun.” More and more I am impressed with the element of playfulness in glossolalia, the sheer childlike delight in praising God in this manner. It is a contagious delight, and in many charismatic prayer groups people not infrequently break out in a childlike, spontaneous, almost irrepressible (but not hysterical) laughter right in the midst of prayers. Such laughter suggests an absence of a heavy super-seriousness about oneself and one’s worship. It is not unlike the freedom a child has to burst into laughter even at an important family gathering. It reflects a lack of pomposity, an ability to see oneself, even one’s serious praying, in perspective. It almost always has about it a releasing quality, and although it may sometimes be occasioned by some slight awkwardness of speech or action on the part of someone in the group, it is almost always a sympathetic and joyful laughter, thus ultimately healing and redemptive.

How fascinating then that Romano Guardini refers to the “playfulness of the liturgy.” In his book The Spirit of the Liturgy he contends that the liturgy, analyzed according to its form, is far sooner a kind of play than it is work. The liturgy, he writes, is life pouring itself forth without an aim, seizing upon riches from its own abundant store, significant through the fact of its existence.... It unites art and reality in a supernatural childhood before God.... It has no purpose, but it is full of divine meaning.... It is in the highest sense the life of a child, in which everything is picture, melody and song.

Of all human activities such worship is the least goal-oriented. “The soul,” Guardini concludes, “must learn to abandon, at least in prayer, the restlessness of purposeful activity; it must learn to waste time for the sake of God.” One is immediately reminded of the beginning sentence of the Westminster Shorter
lution, intercessions, and petitions? And how can we even focus on what is being said when most of our attention is directed to turning pages and deciding whether to stand or to kneel? Even though we remember the advice, "When in doubt kneel," the non-initiate is so preoccupied with physical motions and the proper sequence and enunciation of prayers and other responses that it is almost beside the point to talk of the resting of the analytical mind and an encounter with God in the depths of the human spirit.

But all of this is not really surprising and is not unlike the experience of the person first learning to dance. At this point, even walking seems far more graceful than these awkward, contrived motions. But when one has mastered the dance steps, a kind of "wisdom of the body" takes over which indeed permits the analytical mind, the focused attention, to rest. One begins to "flow" with the beat of the music, the rhythm of the dance.

With the liturgy. The very repetition Sunday after Sunday of the same prayers, responses, and creeds frees the worshipers from needing to focus consciously on what is being said. To be sure, our mind and heart are frequently stimulated by the theological content and the aesthetic movement of the liturgy. Also the total aesthetic impact of the environment — stained glass, wood carvings, Christian symbols, singing, organ music, incense, candles — helps produce a sense of awe and mystery. But as beautiful and moving as all of these elements are, there is yet a deeper movement of the human spirit as it encounters the Spirit of God. The analytical mind is permitted to rest, and the human spirit is free to experience reality on another level. Also, the very formality of the liturgy and the fixed nature of the responses may save worshipers from undue introspection and thus help them center more fully on the presence of God. And even though feelings are often heightened by liturgical worship, there is no conscious attempt to manipulate the emotions to achieve some desired effect. It is on the level of spirit that liturgical worship becomes most significant.

genuine personal commitment; where everyday-life communication is carried over through traveling evangelists and non-rational signals of belonging together; where people are enabled to initiate change."

As Romans 8 says, the Spirit is with us in the depths of our lives, in the cries of unredeemed creation, in the solidarity with all who are not yet freed. But genuine charismatic encounter will eventually lead to authentic liberation, to the wholeness of all humankind.

References
8. Ibid.
11. The author of this article is engaged in a study of West Indian churches in Britain; she has visited all their headquarters in North America.