Forty Years of Fire:

Observing Charismatic Lutheran Theology Today

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It is no secret that great diversity can be found throughout the body of the Lutheran church. Arguably one of the most inviting aspects of the Lutheran faith is the openness to conversation and the wide range of views held by both clergy and laity within the church. However, in the case of the Lutheran church, it seems that a broad theology does not guarantee that all will have a voice in the shifting sea of the church and its direction. Charismatic Lutherans—Lutherans who practice the spiritual gifts typically associated with Pentecostalism—have remained a minority, but some have carved themselves a niche in the organism of the larger Lutheran church. Over the approximately forty years of their existence, charismatic Lutherans have found both criticism and acceptance. Some churches take refuge in the diversity of doctrine and exist as part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America; some churches have experienced frustration as a silenced minority and chose to leave the ELCA. Both groups have at one point had to defend their theology as both Lutheran and charismatic. Over the forty years since the charismatic movement swept through the Lutheran church, charismatic Lutherans have developed a theology that is both coherent and defensible, and is a valid articulation of beliefs that incorporates the charismatic gifts while remaining distinctly Lutheran.

In the early 1960s, members of mainline Protestant and Catholic churches began having spiritual experiences that had been previously associated with Pentecostalism. As the movement gained strength, members saw themselves not as part of an isolated

phenomenon, but as part of a charismatic "Renewal"—breathing new life into a tradition that, in the eyes of many, was stale and dry. Amid much controversy, members of these churches stepped up and told of their experiences of Spirit Baptism, speaking in tongues, miraculous healing, and more; but most of these manifestations of the Holy Spirit were not commonly recognized by the doctrine held to by their denominations, including the Lutheran Church. Though the renewal did not move through the entire church as early leaders had hoped, there remains a small but distinctive group of charismatic Lutherans today. The charismatic Lutherans practice their gifts with the confidence that their experience and teaching are firmly rooted in scriptural authority, and often provide good witness to this point. They are therefore a presence in the Lutheran church that should be preserved and not overlooked.

Lutheran charismatics had originally hoped for a widespread renewal, but the movement waned towards the end of the 70s. Within the Lutheran church, there was tension between the teachings of Martin Luther and the charismatic experiences of individuals. Some welcomed the new charismatics with open arms; other charismatic church leaders were forced to resign from long-held positions due to the discomfort of congregants. The fact that none of Luther's teaching dealt specifically with these experiences added to the ambiguity. Experiences of Spirit Baptism and a differing understanding of spiritual gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit led to tensions within many congregations that could not be resolved.

However, the Lutheran charismatic movement did not fade away completely. Evidenced by the existence of organizations such as the Lutheran charismatic Renewal Services, and individual congregations that identify themselves as charismatic Lutheran

churches, it is clear that charismatics have carved out a niche in the Lutheran church. Though a small part in the body, there are still Lutherans who exercise the charismatic gifts, both within congregations that identify as charismatic and among those who do not specifically identify as charismatic.

Judging from the literature produced at the time when the movement was most fervent, charismatic Lutherans never intended to be a separated community. Those involved in the charismatic movement sincerely hoped that it would spread throughout the body of the Lutheran church. They found a biblical basis for the personal experiences of Spirit baptism and heightened awareness of God's presence. To charismatics, the gifts of the Spirit that marked the movement, specifically speaking in tongues, prophecy and healing, were freely available to the body at large.

Some Aspects of the Movement and Its History

The charismatic renewal experienced by the Lutheran church was ecumenical—it occurred simultaneously in other mainline Protestant denominations, and later the Catholic Church. Author Erling Jorstad traces the beginning of the mainline charismatic renewal to St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California. On Pentecost Sunday in 1960, Fr. Dennis Bennett announced that he, along with 70 other church members, had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.[1] The revelation led to much controversy and the eventual resignation of Bennett from his position as Bishop, though he continued to be a figure in the charismatic movement. The experience spread throughout the Church, and touched numerous congregations across the denominational spectrum and had reached

[1] Erling Jorstad, *Bold in the Spirit: Lutheran charismatic renewal in America today*, [Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1974], 16.

the Catholic Church by 1967.[2] In the case of the Lutheran Church, the movement began about 1961. Larry Christenson claims the charismatic renewal among Lutherans occurred "more-or-less simultaneously" in California, Montana, and Minnesota.[3] From there it expanded worldwide within the Lutheran church, and had reached Germany by 1963. Before 1971, 10% of Lutherans polled had either experienced the renewal personally, or were favorably disposed towards it.[4] Considering the earliest reports, it is no wonder that initially adherents forecasted that the movement would only continue to grow. Charismatics remained a definite minority, but speed with which adherents to the movement could be found throughout the body of the Lutheran church was notable.

However, not much direct evidence exists today to indicate what became of the movement after the 1970s. A quick search of scholarly articles reveals few published after the early 1970s, and even fewer after 1979. Yet, most accounts written in the midst of the renewal, by those within it, saw it as a new era in the life of the church. Indeed, Jorstad, writing in 1974, said that the impact of the charismatic renewal had been so vast that it had progressed beyond the point of being "regarded as a temporary, glamorous fad."[5] If this is the case, then where have all the charismatic Lutherans gone? They have not disappeared entirely, but many self-identified "charismatic Lutherans" have detached from the larger bodies of the Lutheran church, such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Each denomination harbored its own protests to the budding movement, and the Lutheran church was no exception. The charismatic Renewal faced unique opposition

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[2] Ibid. 22.
[3] Larry Christenson, *The Charismatic Renewal Among Lutherans* [Minneapolis, Minnesota: Lutheran Charismatic Renewal Services, 1976], 13.
[4] Ibid. 13.
[5] Jorstad, 25.

within the Lutheran context. Some saw the experiences reported by charismatic Lutherans as decidedly un-Lutheran. The Lutheran church's strong confessional roots caused significant tension when members of Lutheran congregations began espousing theology and experiences that were beyond the reach of Martin Luther's writings. Because a review of his teachings does not reveal any explicit statements on charismatic behavior, the "Lutheran" interpretation of events must be inferred based on other theological foundations.

Why do I care?

I am writing from a place mingled with both objective research and subjective experience. I was raised a Lutheran, confirmed a Lutheran, and considered myself a Lutheran completely until coming to college. Growing up, I observed some charismatic aspects of the surrounding Christian community, but had not the vocabulary or the exposure to truly understand what the difference was between my church and other churches. As a Lutheran in Georgia, I already felt like somewhat of an oddity among my young friends.

As I grew older and more serious about my faith, I still remained isolated from any real, firsthand exposure to charismatic behavior or theology. Upon completing confirmation, I made a serious commitment to God and his presence in my life, and by extension to the Lutheran faith. I developed tenderness for and a deep attachment to my Lutheran family and a reverence for the man Martin Luther who sparked a Reformation, and his writings that provided the foundation for my faith as I knew it. I was committed to remaining a Lutheran, and was blessed enough to have a confirmation instructor who

had also been a pre-seminary and was therefore well versed in Lutheran theology; an aspect which she most assuredly passed on to her small confirmation class. I remember little, if any discussion of charismatics or charismatic gifts.

When I was 17 I moved from New York to Virginia. I was struggling to get a handle on my own faith after such an upheaval, and it was at that time I met a woman who as unlike any other Christian I had met. She began to tell me stories of her life thus far, which was interesting by anyone's standards, but was made more intriguing by God's miraculous presence at many points throughout. She herself was educated at a Pentecostal Bible college, and her theology was firmly rooted there. As I was exposed to charismatic theology and behavior, such as Baptism in the Holy Spirit and Prophecy, I evaluated it only in light of what I knew of the Bible and theology. Because I observed her in her life, and because I thoroughly investigated the things I observed in her, I came to accept most of what I saw her do, and what she taught me.

At some point, I became a Lutheran charismatic—or at least, it would seem. I wasn't conscious of such labels until transferring to Gustavus. After my move to college, my ties with the Lutheran church began to weaken, though my affection for the legacy of Martin Luther and his writings endures. I can only cite dissatisfaction with the institution of the Lutheran church, and a failure to find anyone who shared my charismatic expression of my faith within local Lutheran congregations, as my reason for drifting away. Primarily, a growing dislike for the rigid theological structures that mark a clearly defined denomination is to blame. At present, I fall under the category of general charismatic; a mainline sympathizer but gravitating towards a more evangelical environment.

The charismatic expression of faith was presented to me in the context of a close mentor relationship, and I was exposed to none of the theological or cultural baggage related to terms such as baptism in the Holy Spirit. My working knowledge of Lutheran theology was more than that of many others my age, thanks largely to my gifted and well trained confirmation instructor, but nothing in my Lutheran understanding seemed to inherently reject anything charismatic. In Virginia, I belonged to a Lutheran church, and while I sense that not everyone shared my expression of faith, I did not feel any hostility or in any way inhibited. It wasn't until entering a group of firmly rooted mid-western Lutherans that I began to feel tension between what I believed and practiced and what I saw in my peers.

Throughout the whole of the charismatic movement, personal stories are a significant element. The experience of God's presence, and of the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, is the faith-changing event that propelled the movement through the main body of the church in the 1960s. Just as my experience was highly unique but deeply changing, others bear witness to such an experience, both in the 1960s and in the church today.

The Personal Impact of the Movement at its Height in the 1960s

It was usually shortly before or after the event of Spirit baptism that the impact of the charismatic movement was most readily evident: in the deeply personal faith experiences of charismatics. This was where the charismatic movement wrought the most change. The imminence of God was experienced with far more tangibility than many had ever thought possible. Thousands who had been kneeling in silent obedience

for years suddenly threw their hands up in worship, claiming to be consumed with living fire.

Larry Christenson, a Lutheran pastor and a strong figure throughout the movement, had a testimony similar to many other charismatic Lutherans. He referred to himself as a Lutheran "born and bred," and cites an endearing (and embarrassing) story about protesting the family's attendance of a Methodist Church at the tender age of ten.[6] Like many others in the movement, Christenson saw himself as a committed member of the institution that nurtured his faith.

His journey to the movement began in seminary with a persistent rereading of the book of Acts. Feeling that something was missing in his own faith in comparison to the events of the Apostolic church, Christenson was drawn to the healing movement in the Episcopalian church.[7] Through involvement with these healing ministries, Christenson was exposed to a variety of manifestations of the Holy Spirit. One day, after hearing an evangelist speak at a revival meeting he attended, he himself asked for the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, and decided that he was open to the experience of tongues. After a disappointing prayer—"They prayed and I prayed, but nothing demonstrable happened"—Christenson went home, unsure of what it was precisely that he experienced. However, later that night, he awoke in the middle of the night with the desire to speak in a new tongue; which he spoke, and promptly fell back asleep. He awoke the next morning, thinking it may have been a dream, but later experience proved that this manifestation was real and permanent.[8]

The effect of this event on his spiritual life was profound, in his own words:

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[6] Larry Christenson, *The Charismatic Renewal Among Lutherans*, 25.
[7] Ibid, 28.
[8] Larry Christenson, *The Charismatic Renewal Among Lutherans*, 30.

> These initial events were kind of a doorway into a new dimension of Spiritual awareness. Since then I have known the reality of Christ in a new way. Before, it was primarily my thoughts that were affected… Now it is my life and actions… Faith has taken on a more personal quality. Prayer has become a cornerstone of my daily life. The Word of God has gained new power to shape my thought and action. I have come into more deeply committed relationships with other Christians. Concern for the upbuilding of the church, and for her witness in the world, is not simply an ideal, nor a task; it is a daily conversation with the Lord of the Church. All of this I attribute to the work of the spirit.[9]

Christenson's experience was very similar to other charismatic Lutherans: a committed Lutheran seeks more in his or her faith, ends up at the doors of a charismatic prayer meeting, receives the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and his/her faith is forever changed. "I can think of no price or honor which would persuade me to cancel out these years and go back to where I was before, spiritually," cries one pastor's wife.[10] Others claim that they received the gift many years ago, before they knew what it was, and the charismatic movement gave them an opportunity to retrieve the faith they had as young people.[11] A pastor recalls having heard ecclesial Latin at a prayer meeting where people spoke in tongues,[12] and when he received his own gift, his joy was such that he almost ran out into the street proclaiming that God was alive and real.[13] Universally, people testified that they had received a deeply personal revelation of not only God's existence, but God's power.

The 1960's found the church in a time of massive upheaval. Many other elements of modern society were questioned at their core, and the Church did not escape scrutiny. Many struggled to cling to their beloved traditions amidst the shifting landscape. The intimate (and, often euphoric) experiences of baptism in the Holy Spirit and miraculous

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[9] Ibid, 30.
[10] Ibid. 21.
[11] Ibid. 18.
[12] Ibid. 15.
[13] Ibid. 18.

healing flooded new life into the tradition that many simultaneously clung to and fought to escape. For individuals in the charismatic movement, the sense of solidarity found in other charismatics, as well as the communal nature of life as a charismatic Lutheran (Bible studies and home prayer groups) injected a renewed sense of belonging to the body of Christ. Many of the behaviors were reminiscent of Christianity's infancy, with home churches and Apostolic demonstrations of the Spirit's power. All of this contributed to a renewed sense of purpose for those in the church, both pastors and laity.

The Spiritual Gifts

The central aspect of concern in the charismatic movement was the occurrence of certain spiritual gifts. The precise experience of every congregation—and, for that matter, each congregational member—were somewhat varied. However, there were some common elements throughout. The renewal in each case was demonstrated by the existence of manifestations of the Holy Spirit that were, up to that point, typically designated as Pentecostal. These supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit were the center of the controversy surrounding the movement, as well as the method by which they were bestowed upon the believer—that is, the "baptism of the Holy Spirit." These practices distinguish the charismatics from the main body of the Lutheran church to this day.

Today, the Lutheran church (particularly the ELCA) has a broad understanding of Spiritual gifts. Because the ELCA did not exist at the time of the charismatic movement, there are no specific statements regarding charismatic theology and spiritual gifts. However, a quick search on the ELCA website uncovers a list of Spiritual gifts, and even

an online "inventory" to help individuals within the church discover their gifts.[14] The gifts of prophecy, healing and tongues are conspicuously absent on the list; opening the Spiritual gifts inventory reveals this statement:

> Not all of the gifts identified in scripture are used in this inventory. The spectacular gifts (speaking in tongues, healing and miracles, prophecy, bold proclamation of God) and some of the non-spectacular gifts (martyrdom, celibacy) have not been included. Although these gifts exist, they are not commonly utilized in the mainstream of parish life. Since the objectives of spiritual gift deployment are to unify and produce growth through service, in today's church climate, only the service related gifts have been included.

Thus, even though the ELCA does not reject the presence of the "spectacular" gifts outright, the presence and activity of these gifts in the church today are not expected. The argument of charismatic Lutherans is that these gifts can be—in, fact, *are*—present and active in the mainstream church today. The fact that these gifts are frequently left out of the discussion of the Holy Spirit's activity today is frustrating to many charismatic Lutherans.

During the time of the charismatic movement, both non-charismatic and charismatic Lutherans confronted the same Biblical passages and phenomena, but they often produced different interpretations. Many espoused a cessationist view; i.e., certain gifts have ceased now that the foundational era of the church is over. Some claimed that Luther himself held this view; others maintained that such a view was not necessarily Lutheran at all. While this is not the official view presented by many Lutheran organizations, such as the ELCA, the fact that these gifts are not at all expected and rarely discussed may be viewed as a sort of implicit cessationism at worst; the charismatics would say it is a practice that is shortsighted at best. As far as the events that took place

[14] Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "Discover Your Spiritual Gifts," Elca.org, *http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Ministry/Women-of-the-ELCA/Grow-in-faith-and-affirm-our-gifts/Discover-your-spiritual-gifts.aspx* [accessed May 9 2009].

in the 1960s are concerned, many Lutherans disagreed about how to apply Martin Luther's theology to the events of the charismatic Renewal. Arguably, this same issue applies to Lutheran charismatics today.

Cessationism

Cessationism is the theological viewpoint that certain gifts—particularly tongues, prophecy and healing—ceased with the end of the Apostolic era of the church. Some Lutherans appealed to this element of theology when confronted with reports of charismatic behavior among Lutherans. Those who adopted this view doubted the validity of the charismata reported by Lutheran charismatics. The essentials of this view are well summed by the theologian B.B. Warfield in his work *Counterfeit Miracles*. Regarding the gifts of prophecy, healing and tongs, Warfield writes:

> These gifts were not the possession of the primitive Christian as such; nor for that matter of the Apostolic Church or the Apostolic age for themselves; they were distinctively the authentication of the Apostles. They were part of the credentials of the Apostles as the authoritative agents of God in the founding of the church. Their function thus confined them to distinctively the Apostolic Church, and they necessarily passed away with it. Of this we may make sure on the ground both of principle and of fact; that is to say both under the guidance of the New Testament teaching as to their origin and nature, and on the credit of the testimony of later ages as to their cessation.[15]

It should be noted that while Warfield's summary is still accurate, his work is not the definitive cessationist position, as Richard Gaffin pointed out in his own summation of the cessationist perspective.[16]

Generally, the scriptural witness provided by cessationists is 1 Corinthians 13:10[17], referencing the passing away of the "imperfect" when "the perfect" comes.

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[15] Benjamin B. Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918]: 6
[16] Richard B. Gaffin Jr., "A Cessationist View," *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four views*, eds. Stanley N. Gundry and Wayne A. Grudem, [Zondervan, 1996]: 28

Some scholars interpret the coming of "the perfect" as the coming of Scripture. The gifts of prophecy, tongues and knowledge are often singled out as the set of gifts which have passed away because of their revelational nature. Myron J. Houghton of Faith Baptist Theological Seminary in Akeny, Iowa, explains this view of these gifts, and defends a cessationist position on the basis of 1 Corinthians 13.[18] Houghton argues that the coming of "the perfect" is not an eschatological reference to the coming of Christ at the end of the age, but:

> If… one begins with verse 8, the revelational character of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge will be emphasized and Paul's comparison between the temporary gifts, which communicated partial revelation, and the full and final revelation found in the completed canon of Scripture will be understood.[19]

Though increasingly cessationist scholars disagree[20] with this interpretation of 1 Corinthians 13 in support of cessationism, this position remains a strong perspective.

Baptism and the Holy Spirit in Lutheranism

One of the main conflicts brought about by the charismatic renewal in the Lutheran church was the discussion of baptism. Firstly, the charismatic renewal introduced another concept of baptism: baptism in the Holy Spirit. Secondly, many Lutherans were coming in to contact with the Pentecostal theology of baptism in water,

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[17] This passage is often central to the cessationist position: "[8]Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. [9]*For we know in part and we prophesy in part,* [10]*but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.* [11]When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. [12]Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known," 1 Corinthians 13:8-12, NIV (emphasis added.)

[18] Myron J. Houghton, "A Reexamination of 1 Corinthians 13:8-13," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 153 no. 611 [July 1996]: 347

[19] Ibid, 356.

[20] Scholars such as Richard B. Gaffin do not support this exegesis of 1 Corinthians 13. Instead, he bases his view on a certain exegesis of Ephesians 2:20 and on his analysis of the baptism events in Acts, a thorough discussion of which can be read in his contribution to the aforementioned *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?,*

which was very close to that of Baptist theology. Thus, questions such as the validity of infant baptism and God's activity caused some Lutherans to change their theology and practice of baptism to more closely model the Pentecostal teaching, and some even sought rebaptism in water. These elements of charismatic Lutheran theology and the questions that they brought to the larger church alarmed the Lutheran community and only further added to the apprehension many felt regarding the movement. The conflict between the Pentecostal understanding of water baptism, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the Lutheran teaching on water baptism lies in the different understandings of the nature of the workings of the Holy Spirit, and God's action in baptism.

Of the seven sacraments handed down from the Catholic Church, only two were carried over in to Lutheran theology and practice: Baptism and Communion. The Lutheran theology of baptism intertwines with the Lutheran understanding of Salvation and the community of the Body of Christ. Naturally, any attempt to amend the traditional Lutheran teaching on baptism would be met with intense opposition. Martin Luther's cry of, "Be gone, Satan! I am baptized!" echoes throughout the history of the Lutheran church. Baptism isn't simply a theological point, but intimately tied with an understanding of what it means to be Lutheran. Luther's personal struggles were overcome in part by his understanding of what it means to be baptized in water, and what God does for the believer in baptism.

A sacrament is a rite or a practice in which God is *active*. In the Lutheran understanding of baptism, God's word binds with the water, producing something beyond simply washing the believer, and beyond the outwardly visible act of being baptized. As Martin Luther writes in the Large Catechism, "… you are not to doubt that Baptism is a

divine act, not something devised or invented by man."[21] The believer is brought in to Christ's death and raised again with him to new life; baptism represents the burial of the old self and the rebirth of the new that is seated with Christ Jesus. This view of baptism is, obviously, intensely sacramental and indeed almost mystical when compared to other traditions where it is simply an initiation in to the group of believers and an outward symbol of an inward belief. In Lutheranism, it represents these things too, but also more.

Rather than a decision that the believer makes and an action initiated by the baptized, *God* is primarily active in the Lutheran view of baptism. In answering the question, "What is Baptism?" Martin Luther writes, "It is not simple, ordinary water, but water comprehended in God's Word and thus *made Holy*. It is nothing else than a divine water, not because the water in itself is more special than other water, but because God's Word and commandment are added to it."[22] This element is of essential importance and necessary to classify the practice of baptism as sacramental. Not only is the believer united with Christ in his death and resurrection through baptism, but he is also united in to the Body of Christ that is all believers. All of this is by the means of the Holy Spirit who is active in baptism—previous to and apart from the actions of the believer in baptism. In baptism, the Holy Spirit sanctifies the believer and joins him in to the Body of Christ.[23] Baptism then is an important element of Lutheran understanding regarding the person and activity of the Holy Spirit.

Aside from being the point at which the Holy Spirit enters the believer and joins him or her to Christ, Lutherans teach that baptism is essential to salvation. The command

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[21] F. Samuel Janzow, *Luther's Large Catechism: A Contemporary Translation with Study Questions*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978: 98.
[22] Ibid, 99.
[23] Janzow, 76

in Mark, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved"[24] is applied in this understanding of baptism. The supernatural work of God through baptism continues, beyond uniting the believer with Christ in his death and resurrection. According to Martin Luther: "Stated most simply, the power, effect, benefit, fruit, and purpose of Baptism is to save."[25] This departs from the Pentecostal (and, for that matter, the Evangelical) understanding of baptism as a symbol of faith. According to Lutheran teaching, part of God's saving work occurs during baptism.

However, while baptism is an example of one of the Spirit's activities, the primary function that precedes this action of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is faith; in other words, the Holy Spirit is that which enables faith in the believer. This is the understanding of the Holy Spirit evident in the teachings of Martin Luther. The Lutheran understanding of the function of the Holy Spirit flows from Luther's own writings on the third person in the Trinity:

> I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and to all believers in Christ everlasting life. This is most certainly true.[26]

First and foremost, Martin Luther saw the Holy Sprit as that which creates faith in the believer. According to Jeffrey K. Mann, in the Lutheran context, "A proper understanding of the Holy Spirit is necessary for a proper understanding of faith."[27] In

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[24] The Holy Bible, N.I.V., Mark 16:16
[25] Janzow, 102.
[26] Martin Luther, *The Small Catechism*, [St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House], 2005.
[27] Jeffery K. Mann, "Luther and the Holy Spirit: Why Pneumatology Still Matters," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 34, no. 2 [April, 2007]: 111.

Luther's theology, the Holy Spirit allows the believer to appropriate the saving message of the Gospel. So then, it would not be possible for one to believe without the presence and action of the Holy Spirit. This is especially integral to an understanding of the conflict regarding baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Charismatics identified strongly with Martin Luther's teachings on the Holy Spirit—as did their critics. Jorstad agrees that Luther left behind no systematized theology of charismatic gifts, but asserts that the basic themes of his teaching on the Holy Spirit can be inferred.[28] Others, such as Scott H. Hendrix, insist that Lutheran charismatic theology is a theology of power, and not of the humility and suffering exhibited by Christ on the cross.[29] Both sides argue opposing points using the same scriptural evidence and same the same body of Martin Luther's work.

The Controversy: Water Baptism in Pentecostalism, and Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Pentecostalism recognizes two baptisms: a baptism in water, initiated by the believer and a subsequent baptism in the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues. The theology and practice of water baptism in Pentecostalism is not the sacramental view held by the Lutheran church. It is, instead, seen as an outward symbol of faith, and a declaration on behalf of the believer that he or she has chosen to enter the Body of Christ. It is, according to the theologian Koo Dong Yun, a "public testimony of one's faith in Jesus Christ." He goes on to say that most Pentecostals even avoid using the term "sacrament" to describe baptism, and instead refer to it as an "ordinance."[30] Baptism still

[28] Jorstad.15.
[29] Scott H. Hendrix, "Charismatic Renewal: Old Wine in New Skins," *Currents in Theology and Mission*, 4, no. 3 (January 1977): 162.
[30] Koo Dong Yun, "Water baptism and Spirit baptism: Pentecostals and Lutherans in

represents the union with Christ in his death and resurrection, but the association is merely a symbolic representation of a spiritual reality—the physical symbol of the initiation in to the Body of Christ—as opposed to a supernatural event.

However, the baptismal theology that truly made a splash in the Lutheran church was the practice of and the teaching behind the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Through water baptism, the believer is initiated in to the Body of Christ. Spirit baptism is a later, post-conversion empowerment of the Holy Spirit for ministry. When the believer receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he or she receives the full impartation of the Spirit and, consequently, the gifts associated with it. In classic Pentecostalism, this experience is evidenced by the baptized speaking in tongues. Though, the presence of other gifts is associated with this event, such as prophecy and healing.

So then, the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs subsequent to and separate from conversion. The believer asks for this baptism in prayer. This is often accompanied by the laying on of hands from others in the church. This experience was central to the charismatic movement, bringing about the massive spiritual shift of those who identified as charismatic. It was a faith-changing event for those who received the baptism. The exact experience could differ radically from one person to another, but the experience was almost always evidenced by the baptized speaking in tongues. Often, other gifts manifested at the time of this infilling, such as prophesy or healing. Many attested to other things, ranging from a deep sense of euphoria, to a dramatically intense awareness of God's existence and love.[31]

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dialogue." *Dialog* 43, no, 4 Winter (2004): 344-351.

[31] Christenson, *The Charismatic Renewal Among Lutherans*, 17.

This practice in particular was troublesome to Lutheran theology, because the believer actively seeks this impartation of the Hoy Spirit. As far as Lutherans are concerned, God comes to the believer through baptism, not the other way around. This point is acutely important in both distinguishing the Lutheran understanding of baptism and the conflict aroused by the discussion of baptism in the Holy Spirit. This also applied to the conflict surrounding adult baptism in water. Teaching that one must be an adult and believe in order to receive water baptism implies, as far as Lutherans are concerned, that the activity of baptism lies first and foremost with the believer and not with God. This is contrary to the Lutheran emphasis on *God's* activity in baptism. As Luther wrote concerning baptism in the Large Catechism:

> "…Baptism is not our work, but God's … It is not by your mere act of letting water be poured over you that you grasp and keep hold of the blessings so that they will benefit you. On the contrary, the blessings conveyed in Baptism benefit you when you let yourself be baptized in the name of God on the basis of His command and ordinance in order to receive the salvation God has promised. Now, this the hand or body cannot do; it is something that the heart must believe.[32]

The introduction of Holy Spirit baptism and exposure to Pentecostal baptismal theology presented a challenge to Lutherans who wanted to accept the baptism of the Holy Spirit while maintaining their Lutheran identity. Larry Christenson suggests that the introduction of charismatic theology did not inherently threaten Lutheran teachings on baptism, but tension emerged between the newly introduced Pentecostal non-sacramental theology of baptism and the traditional Lutheran view.[33] Charismatic Lutheran leaders like Larry Christenson sought to reconcile the two factions when the Lutheran charismatic movement was just emerging.

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[32] Janzow, 102-103
[33] Christenson, 53.

Moving toward a Lutheran interpretation of Spirit baptism, Christenson proposed that baptism in the Holy Spirit is an "actualization" of what occurs in water baptism.[34] Proceeding from the Lutheran understanding that it is God who acts in baptism, Christenson asserts that baptism in the Holy Spirit "is a release… of a potential which exists in one's relationship with Christ."[35] The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not a secondary experience of baptism, but is intrinsically tied to the previous experience of baptism in water. Even with the introduction of Holy Spirit baptism, God takes the first step towards humanity in water baptism. This view of Christenson's, or one very similar, is what is generally understood in Lutheran charismatic theology today.

Though the introduction of Pentecostal theology regarding baptism created tension in the Lutheran church, not everyone believes that the Pentecostal understanding of Spirit baptism and the Lutheran sacramental view of water baptism are mutually exclusive. Charismatic Lutherans have been working to reconcile the two views since the beginning of the charismatic movement. Some observe that the seemingly divergent understandings of baptism are rooted in two different areas of Scripture. The Lutherans draw heavily from the Pauline writings—especially the book of Romans—regarding baptism, while Pentecostals emphasize the Lukan material found in Acts. One view of this is outlined by Yun, "These differing contemporary understandings of baptism derive from the same Bible, but from two differing perspectives or horizons."[36] So, then these two horizons of baptism are not contradictory but work together to form a complete picture of baptism in water and the Spirit.

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[34] Ibid, 49.
[35] Ibid, 50.
[36] Yun, 344.

Yun explores the differences between the two theologies in terms of horizons. He supposes that theologians from each tradition have their own horizon—their own set of "presuppositions, biases, interests and limitations"—on which they stand, and from which point their theological framework emerges.[37] The Lutheran and Catholic horizon is the sacramental understanding of the Christian faith. Furthermore, he presents the Lutheran horizon as such:

> The Pauline predilection … stands out in the Lutheran horizon … the Lutheran Reformation is underpinned by a foundation of *grace*. Luther's theology of grace (*sola gratia*) remains Pauline and heavily rooted in the Book of Romans. In terms of baptism, Lutherans continue to be more or less Pauline. … For St. Paul, there is *one* baptism, which is an integral part of one's salvation. With respect to baptism and salvation, one easily detects the Pauline orientation in the Lutheran horizon.[38]

With that starting point in mind, it is easy to see how conflict emerged in the Lutheran church as a result of the charismatic movement, caused by the influx of Pentecostal ideas surrounding baptism. Lutheran theology wraps tightly around a Pauline expression of baptism, and baptism is central to the Lutheran understanding of God's work in the world. Such a strongly rooted element of theology is not easily shifted.

Just as Yun identifies a Pauline orientation in Lutheran baptismal theology, he classifies the Pentecostal "prejudice" as being rooted in the Lukan material. Unlike the Pauline literature that stresses the importance of one baptism, Yun asserts that the Lukan material stresses the importance of Spirit baptism and water baptism as distinct from each other. The two may function very closely together, but certain Lukan writings, particularly Acts 8:12-17 and Acts 19:3-6, separate the events of water baptism and Spirit baptism by a significant amount of time.

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[37] Ibid, 349.
[38] Ibid., 349.

In Acts 8, the passage describes a group of Samaritans who believed and were baptized in water, but did not receive the Holy Spirit until the arrival of the Apostles and the laying on of hands.[39] In Acts 19, Paul comes upon a group of Ephesians who had received John's baptism, but had yet heard of the Holy Spirit and did not receive it until Paul placed his hands on them.[40] Both of these passages describe a separate baptism of water and immersion, or impartation of the Holy Spirit. While this does not necessarily imply that these instances are normative for the whole of the Body of Christ, the breadth and depth of the Spirits work in conversion and baptism should be noted. Passages such as these imply a wider range of diversity in the Christian experience than rigid theological constructions often allow.

Instead of being two contradictory ideas, both streams of theology have something to offer the baptism conversation, and present a full picture of baptism in to Christ's body. Yun posits that instead of opposing each other, these two understandings of baptism join together to encompass the scope of God's work in the world.

> …Theologians in the past forced or even manipulated biblical passages beyond their plain meanings so that the passages fit their systematic theologies neatly. I, however, want to insist that one should accept the diverse horizons in the bible as they are. God does not represent a one-dimensional, fixed reality because this God is *living* and *moving*. No one horizon can fully exhaust the total reality of God.[41]

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[39] Acts 8:15-17, "When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, [16]because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. [17]Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit."

[40] Acts 19:1-6, "[1]While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples [2]and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when[a] you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." [3]So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. [4]Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." [5]On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. [6]When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied."

[41] Ibid.

Using this understanding as a starting point, it is possible to walk forward, towards a reconciliation of the Pentecostal and sacramental views on baptism. Rather than forcing biblical texts in to a theological framework, the texts can stand as they are and the range of God's interaction with humanity can be fully opened.

Speaking in Tongues (Glossolalia)

Following the discussion of Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the issue of Speaking in tongues. Of all the spiritual gifts that accompanied the charismatic renewal, the gift of tongues—or Glossolalia—was frequently amid the most controversy, and was the first and most expected physical evidence of Spirit Baptism. It was also, in many ways, the most noticeably supernatural manifestation out of those associated with the charismatic movement. The language manifested is believed by some to be a real, earthly language; others believe it is some sort of a spiritual pseudo language, or a tongue literally spoken by angels. It is no wonder, then, when speaking to the church in Corinth about the practice, the Apostle Paul wrote, "If…some who do not understand, or some unbelievers come in [while you are speaking in tongues], will they not say that you are out of your mind?"[42] There's no doubt that one of the largest disturbances brought to the Lutheran church by the charismatic movement was caused by speaking in tongues.

Jorstad placed tongues at the center of the controversy. He cited tongues as the issue of greatest concern when the American Lutheran Church, one of the largest bodies of the Lutheran church at the time, launched its committee to investigate the charismatic movement.[43] Those in the church were unsure as to whether or not this practice should

[42] 1 Corinthians 14:23, New International Version.
[43] Jorstad, 25.

be integrated into normal worship and other church gatherings, whether pastors should encourage or denounce the practice, and whether the practice was even biblical. Jorstad argues that charismatics were backing their experience with Scriptural witness, though the text itself often proved rather confusing. The Bible speaks of the practice, but instructions regarding it are ambiguous—it seems simultaneously denounced and encouraged. The Apostolic church seemed to speak of tongues much the same way churches do today: as a mixed blessing.[44] The practice was strongly condemned in a 1977 article by Scott H. Hendrix. He cited psychologist John Kildahl, who concluded that there is no evidence that glossolalia is caused by anything outside of natural processes. And he referred to manifestations of the phenomenon as "self induced or group manipulation."[45] Hendrix's position is extreme, but many raised serious concerns.

Not everyone shared Hendrix's grim viewpoint. Lutheran theologian Krister Stendahl lamented that the discussion of tongues is often couched in terms of the "problem" of glossolalia. He is quick to point out that the apostle Paul, while noting the difficulties surrounding the practice of tongues, labeled it as a divine gift.[46] Though Lutheran charismatics later downplayed the importance of tongues as a physical evidence of Holy Spirit baptism (as did the other mainline charismatic movements), the importance of speaking in tongues was not overlooked, and is an important element of the charismatic Lutheran church today.[47] The gift of tongues as practiced by Lutheran

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[44] Jorstad, 26. Some verses from 1 Corinthians that mention the practice are ambiguous in their meaning. The verses directly mention speaking in tongues, and at once seem to encourage the practice (1 Cor. 14:5), and immediately thereafter condemn it (1 Cor. 14:19.).
[45] Hendrix, 159.
[46] Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976): 110
[47] Both Antola and Yun note that charismatics today do not place the same importance on speaking in tongues as the physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit as those in classic Pentecostalism; Antola, 143; Yun, 346.

charismatics can be related back to scripture and to an understanding of Christ's presence and role in faith.

Stendahl argues against the notion that the practice of tongues creates a spiritual hierarchy among believers by leading to a belief that those who speak in tongues are more spiritual than others. He appeals to the text of Romans 8, and Paul's mention of the "unspeakable groanings" of the Spirit that intercede for those who do not know what to pray. In his opinion, Paul is appealing to the role of glossolalia to assist the believer in prayer.

> The unspeakable groan of glossolalia is that of the Spirit interceding for the saints. Thus, in Paul's mind, the gift of glossolalia is not a sign of spiritual accomplishment … To him glossolalia is the gift that fits in to his experience of weakness.[48]

So, then, tongues intercedes for the believer in his or her weakness, not because of any great faith related achievement. This is to answer those who assert that the notion of speaking in tongues and Spirit baptism imposes a spiritual hierarchy on the church.

The purpose of tongues, as practiced by charismatic Lutherans, is even broader than this. The gift of tongues as a personal dimension and is useful for the building up of an individual's faith. As Paul writes of the practices, "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church."[49] This verse, and the surrounding conversation, contrasts the functions of the gift of prophecy with the gift of tongues. Paul argues for a more corporate application of prophecy, whereas speaking in tongues is for personal devotions and edification of the individual believer. As put forward in the book *Welcome, Holy Spirit*, "For many people, speaking in tongues is an unparalleled

[48] Stendahl, 111.
[49] 1 Corinthians 14:5, NIV.

experience of God's presence."[50] Within the context of the charismatic Lutheran church, the practice is seen as a faith-building experience and affirmation of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Prophecy

Just as the gift of tongues is meant to edify the individual believer, the gift of prophecy is intended to build up the church at large. The term "prophecy" carries with it some ambiguity. What charismatics mean when they employ the term, and what immediately comes to mind in the popular consciousness, are sometimes two different things. As well as tongues, the baptism in the Holy Spirit was associated with the exercise of other gifts as they existed in New Testament times. Prophecy is one of the gifts that marked the charismatic movement, and carried quite enough controversy (even when compared to such boat-rockers as glossolalia.) The definition of prophecy is somewhat elusive, but carries more depth than the general understanding of a prediction of the future. Most charismatics reject this pseudo-fortune telling definition of prophecy, and espouse a broader (but just as controversial) view of prophecy as inspired revelation of God's word in a situation. This word may carry with it a future prediction or a conditional call to repentance, but it is first and foremost for the edification and instruction of the church and for the building up of relationship between the church and God.

As the ELCA has no specific theology governing the function and practice of the gift of prophecy, the opposition charismatic Lutherans face is the typically the same as encountered by other charismatics, both in mainline and evangelical circles. Specifically

[50] Christenson, *Welcome Holy Spirit*, 267.

regarded the Lutheran church, prophecy is neither denounced nor encouraged, but it is absent from the general discussion. The fact that it is not a normally operative part of congregational life is the point of contention put forward by most charismatic Lutherans.

According to Mark J. Cartledge, charismatics maintain that the gift of prophecy is not the same as preaching, as "they believe that the message comes directly from God rather than being mediated through exposition of Scripture."[51] Charismatics also reject the popular secular understanding of prophecy as simply a prediction or a kind of fortune-telling. Antola, too, asserts this, "Although Prophecy in everyday language is often perceived as a revelation of the future, the meaning the Bible most often uses of it is to reveal something hidden in the present situation."[52] Prophecy may contain within it a prediction of a future event, but it is first and foremost a revelation of the mind of God, either in the form of intimate knowledge about present events or a revelation of some element of the future. Rather than functioning in a very narrow framework, a broad definition of prophecy is usually employed by charismatics. Cartledge outlines this understanding of experiences that, he says, form the basis of a prophetic event. He includes the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, the discernment of spirits and the interpretation of tongues in his discussion of prophecy.[53] These terms are both related to, and function closely with prophecy.

In all cases of prophecy, a spontaneous revelation of God's words or thoughts about a current situation is the central theme. Such a revelation can take many forms. Cartledge succinctly outlines these different forms of prophecy in his own discussion,

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[51] Mark J. Cartledge, "Charismatic Prophecy: A Definition and Description," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, No. 5 (October 1994): 89
[52] Antola, 136-137
[53] Cartledge, 80.

and his definitions will be borrowed here. According to Cartledge, prophetic revelation can run the gamut from words, or phrases of words coming in to ones head, to dreams and visions or physical feelings meant to reveal something about a situation. Words coming to mind can be in the form of an audible voice or an image, "Indeed, some authors claim that voices are heard in a subjective sense, although it is possible to think of them as real… Others explain that they have 'seen' a word in their mind's eye, sometimes superimposed upon an object within their physical sight."[54]

Prophecy can also come in the form of a "sense" of the message, but not the precise words to speak. In this instance, the sense is distinct and not vague, but the precise words used to convey the message are left to the prophet himself.[55] Another, probably more easily recognized example of prophecy is in the form of dreams and visions. It is assumed that these images come directly from God and are implanted in the mind of the one receiving the prophetic revelation, frequently interpreted by another charismatic who did not necessarily receive the same revelation.[56] Also, revelation may sometimes be received in the form of physical sensations or impressions. Finally, another aspect of prophetic revelation may come in the form of interpretation of tongues. Tongues with interpretation is generally categorized as a prophetic revelation of sorts. Some take great care to claim that the interpretation gives only a sense of the original message, and is not necessarily a direct translation.[57]

Prophecy is a beneficial element to the building up of relationship between God and the church. The primary function of prophecy may seem, on the surface, to be the

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[54] Ibid, 83-84.
[55] Ibid, 84.
[56] Ibid, 85.
[57] Ibid, 87.

information that is actually revealed through the prophetic event. However, Antola defines the beneficial nature of prophecy as such:

> The purpose of prophecy is defined as 'awareness of God's presence' and as 'The presence of God'… It is thus defined as a personal experience about the transcendent God's presence or immanence. If this is true of prophecy, it means that the details of the prophecy's content are not the primary goal of prophecy; the relationship between man and God which is built up by this gift is.[58]

So while the impulse is to place the focus on the supernatural revelation itself, it is the supernatural nature of the revelation that draws humanity in to God's presence, affirming God's involvement in current issues and God's promise to be present in future events.

Those who are skeptical of prophecy, including those in the Lutheran church, often accuse charismatics of putting the revelations of prophecy above the authority of scripture. Charismatics vehemently reject the validity of this claim, affirming that all prophecy is held subject to scrutiny in light of the authority of scripture. Most charismatics affirm that prophecy, while a revelation of the mind of God, is mediated through a human filter and therefore must be thoroughly examined, first by the light of scripture and secondly by church authority and congregational discernment. However, though this is asserted by most charismatics, the subjective nature of prophecy often opens it up to a less rigid application of the previously stated guidelines. Yet, when prophecy is practiced within a framework of biblical authority and church community, the benefits are such that one can easily see why Paul urged the Corinthian church to "eagerly desire the spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy."[59]

The Lutheran controversy surrounding the gift of prophecy was not as directly controversial as the issues surrounding baptism in the Holy Spirit, or even tongues. As

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[58] Antola, 137.
[59] 1 Corinthians 14:1, NIV.

articulated by the book *Welcome, Holy Spirit*, produced by International Lutheran Charismatic Renewal Leader's consultation in 1981, most concerns centered on the role of prophecy in relation to Scripture and God's authority—much the same as the controversy concerning the charismatic renewal and prophecy elsewhere. *WHS* (which articulated a charismatic Lutheran theology later widely adopted) strongly supported the importance of a prophetic church today:

> The whole of Scripture testifies to the fact that prophecy is a key element in God's dealings with his people. The strong evangelistic outreach of the early church was closely linked to the ministry of prophets … This was a logical consequence of the Old testament promises that in the age to come there would be an outpouring of the Spirit on all believers.[60]

This view of prophecy continues to function in the charismatic Lutheran church today.

Healing

A strong focus on supernatural healing is an aspect closely associated with classic Pentecostalism, and is another element associated with the Lutheran charismatic renewal. The charismatic movement throughout the mainline denominations was marked with a resurgence of the belief in and the desire for supernatural healings by means of the Holy Spirit. The gift of healing is one of the gifts said to be reclaimed from New Testament times, and the occurrence and expectance of healing along with it. The general criticism of healing is that it is false or exaggerated. Once again, the cessationists claimed that such miraculous gifts of healing ceased after the foundational era of the church.

As far as the ELCA is concerned, healing belongs to the list of spectacular gifts that are not commonly active in parish life. Charismatic Lutherans disagree with this

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[60] Larry Christenson, *Welcome, Holy Spirit*, [Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987]: 262.

assessment, and assert that supernatural healing is readily available to believers today. As with prophecy, most charismatic Lutherans take issue with the fact that gifts of healing are left out of the mainstream discussion of spiritual gifts.

One of the most persistent claims against healing is that it can rarely be authenticated. Sociologist David C. Lewis takes a step towards refuting this claim in his own, "Analysis of Contemporary Healing," published in the larger volume, *The Kingdom and the Power*. Through the course of his research, Lewis uncovered such cases as a well documented case of a 9-year-old-girl healed after prayer of her deafness, for which a specialist who had seen the child previously reported there was no cure.[61] Another well documented case concerns an infant who was healed of cancer; the healing was once again collaborated both by medical records and eyewitnesses.[62] Scholarship by those such as Lewis rises up to challenge critics who are highly skeptical of instances of miraculous healing.

Some of these criticisms of the charismatic movement continue today, some of them have evolved and changed with the movement as new dynamics arise. Lutheran charismatics still face challenges today; if not in the form of blatant criticism, then in the form of disregard for the movement as a whole.

Healing ministry was a part of the Lutheran charismatic renewal, and continues to be an aspect of charismatic Lutherans today. While charismatic Lutherans believe that God heals through natural means, it is also believed that God sometimes directly intervenes in healing. Christ's presence and power are central to the charismatic Lutheran understanding of healing through the power of the Holy Spirit. According to

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[61] David C. Lewis, "Analysis of Contemporary Healing," *The Kingdom and the Power*, Gary S. Greig and Kevin N. Springer, eds., [Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1993]: 323.
[62] Ibid, 326.

Antola, sickness is a result of the broken relationship with God, "Thus healing ministry is an essential part of the proclamation of the Gospel."[63] Physical healing is part of the reconciliation of God and humanity through Jesus Christ.

Another aspect of healing ministry throughout the charismatic movement is that of exorcism and a renewed awareness of and focus on spiritual warfare. However, Antola notes that unlike Pentecostalism which had a mature demonology in its beginning, Lutheran charismatics hold "a moderate line" concerning Satanic powers.[64] While charismatic Lutherans do not hold a particularly elaborate and defined set of teachings regarding demonology, they acknowledge the reality of Satan's activity in the world and Christ's triumph over the powers of evil. Antola points to the experience of Christ's real presence and power in exorcism as the significance of these healing ministries of deliverance from demons.[65] Both the ministries of physical healing and deliverance from demons, and the spiritual gifts associated with such lead to a theology centered around God's power and activity in the world today. The Lutheran Charismatic renewal brought a fresh sense of God's power and movement in the world, and is an aspect of the movement which continues through to recent times.

The Movement Today

As of the early 1970s, almost all who were within the charismatic movement in the Lutheran church testified that the renewal showed no signs of slowing down. Even as of the mid-1980s when Larry Christenson's book, *Welcome Holy Spirit* sought to provide

[63] Antola, 152.
[64] Ibid, 159.
[65] Ibid, 161.

an overview of the renewal, it was seen as a movement still underway.[66] Yet, as of today, all traces of the movement seem to have disappeared from the mainline discussion. Though the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has official statements regarding the charismatic movement available on their website to this day,[67] the ELCA has no such official statements on the matter. The obvious reason for this is that the ELCA has only been in existence since 1988, while the LCMS was an established Lutheran denomination when the charismatic movement was in its most heated state. However, the lack of literature specifically regarding the charismatic demonstrates that the movement had died down to the extent that it bore no need of mention by the newly formed ELCA in the late 1980s.

Indeed, in his article on the subject, Peter Hocken reports that from the 1970s to the 1990s, no mainline denomination in the United States reported steady expansion.[68] Though the charismatic renewal seemed to explode in the 1960s, the fervor of the movement died down in the following years. According to Hocken, "The numerical growth of the 1970s has not been maintained."[69] However, this is not to say that the movement has disappeared from the Lutheran church entirely. Hocken also states that, though there are some who consider themselves "ex-charismatics," one quarter to one third of the participants in the annual International Lutheran Conference on the Holy

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[66] Christenson, *Welcome, Holy Spirit*, 19.
[67] The Luteran Church—Missouri Synod has several statements regarding the charismatic movement—released during the 1970s—that are still available on their website today. Their statements reflect that the LCMS ultimately rejected the Lutheran charismatic Renewal on theological grounds. Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, "The Charismatic Movement," www.lcms.org, *http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=516* [accessed May 10 2009].
[68] Hocken, Peter. "The Charismatic Movement in the United States." *PNUEMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 16, no. 2 (Fall 1994):191-214
[69] Ibid. 212.

Spirit are new to the movement.[70] Yet, he also goes on to say that the Lutheran Renewal, while it demonstrates some growth, has made very little impact on governmental and theological systems in the church.[71] Clearly, the Renewal did not have the impact on the greater body of the church that the early leaders had hoped it would.

Some associations started at the time of the renewal are still in existence today. The Lutheran Renewal Services, which began with Larry Christenson in the 1970s, is still in existence today, and they continue to hold the annual Lutheran Conference on the Holy Spirit.[72] A brief investigation of http://www.lutheranrenewal.org/ reveals a newsletter still released, and a list of publications by a variety of charismatics, including Lutherans, that are still active and writing. The site announces various other conferences and seminars still being held.

There are also some congregations both within and without the ELCA that either identify as charismatic, or leave themselves open to operating in the spectacular gifts. On their statement of beliefs found on their website, North Heights Lutheran Church in St. Paul explicitly states that "The Holy Spirit's supernatural and spiritual gifts are operative today in the life of the believer and the church."[73] Considering the existence of this church and other congregations like it, it seems a Lutheran charismatic community exists for people today. However, it is clear that charismatics are not in a central position within the mainline. This is a movement on the fringe of the Lutheran Church—not at its heart.

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[70] Ibid. 199.
[71] Ibid. 200.
[72] Lutheran Renewal Services, *http://www.lutheranrenewal.org/* [accessed 16 December 2008].
[73] North Heights Lutheran Church, "What We Believe," *www.nhlc.org, http://www.nhlc.org/AboutUs/WhatWeBelieve/tabid/356/Default.aspx* [accessed 10 May 2009].

Judging by the LCRS website, at least some charismatic Lutherans are well aware of their position within the Lutheran Church. An article by Paul Anderson entitled, "To Stay or To Leave," conveys the angst of many of his fellow charismatics.[74] Charismatic Lutherans are frustrated at their place within the church. Most are disappointed that they are frequently not heard in the greater body of the Lutheran Church. Charismatics are generally more socially conservative, and their opinions regarding hot button issues in the church frequently come out on the side of what most would classify as "fundamentalist" or evangelical. This is not the current direction of the Lutheran Church. Anderson, then, poses the question: "So do we bail out or do we stay in hopes of bringing change? Divorce is sad and shameful, but spiritual adultery is devastating."[75] Though charismatics may experience the Spirit's demonstration of power in their own lives, they see no powerful change being wrought in the church as a whole. Anderson's letter ultimately edges toward the side of leaving the church—at least in a formal sense. Yet, this prospect is heartbreaking to many Lutherans.

Ultimately, even if the Lutheran charismatic movement is still in existence, it did not continue to snowball as early followers had hoped. However, the movement did not die away completely. The repercussions of the charismatic movement on the Lutheran church are not evident to their fullest extent upon first brush, nor have they been adequately explored. Charismatics themselves seem to be at a loss as what it means to be a charismatic in the Lutheran church today. To some of the more frustrated charismatics, the movement is now lodged in a place of having a child's voice in a changing Lutheran family; small, and unable to affect real change. However, although most agree that

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[74] Paul Anderson, Lutheran Charismatic Renewal Services, July 2004 *http://www.lutheranrenewal.org/bulletin_july04a.html*/ [accessed 16 December 2008].
[75] Anderson

charismatics are not a driving force in the larger denominations of the Lutheran church, they have not disappeared completely.

Charismatic Lutherans and Their Contribution

In 1976, Larry Christenson wrote of the importance of the "distinctive Lutheran contribution" to the Charismatic movement.[76] Though the movement today does not match the fervor of the movement then, there remains a spot for charismatic Lutherans today—both within the Lutheran church and the wider Body of Christ. The ecumenical nature of the charismatic movement was one of its most distinctive elements. Addressing specifically the charismatic Catholic Church and their approach to relations across the denominations, Christenson has this to say:

> Their approach to cooperation and unity among Christians was not "non-denominational" which so readily glosses over differences and reduces everything to the lowest common denominator. Unity achieved in this way tends to be shallow and one dimensional. Their approach was truly ecumenical, which sees each tradition as having something special to contribute. Differences may be mutually enriching, or they may be items for discussion and exploration; they need not be divisive. We can respect, appreciate, and learn from one another's differences, even while the Spirit's patient work of forging a deeper unity is going on.[77]

The experience of new and exciting ways of expressing one's faith brought Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians and more in to the same Bible studies and conferences; in to each other's homes and lives. The charismatics that remain within the mainline traditions today share a kinship with each other that bridges the denomination boundary that can so often be deeply divisive.

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[76] Christenson, 9.
[77] Christenson, 10.

The position and fate of charismatic Lutherans is not only important to Christians outside the Lutheran denomination, but to those within the Lutheran body as well. If what the charismatic Lutherans propose is true—namely, that they base their practices on scripture, and that those practices fit within a sound theological framework—then these gifts are meant for more than a peculiar group of Christians within a larger body. Krister Stendahl found evidence in his own reading of Paul that the charismatic experience, at least in some form, should be normative for the whole church:

> The History of our main traditions is one of fragmentation and impoverishment within the Christian community. … It seems to me crystal clear that if the Presbyterians and the Episcopalians, the Lutherans, and all the "proper" Christians, including the Catholics, did not consciously or unconsciously suppress such phenomena as glossolalia, and if other denominations did not especially encourage them, then the gifts of the Spirit … would belong to the common register of Christian experience. The Pauline recipe is sound … The fullness of the church is … the body of Christ with many and diverse members, i.e., gifts.[78]

Proceeding from such a view, it would seem that Lutheran charismatics may have stumbled upon something of interest to the Lutheran church at large: a theology that includes both Lutheran teaching charismatic gifts, showing that the gifts can be successfully applied outside of the Pentecostal denomination to which they're typically attributed.

Though the charismatic fervor has died down, charismatic Lutheran's remain a distinct element within the Lutheran church. Their example and influence are typically under-analyzed and underestimated, but the extent of their contribution has not been fully exhausted. In sum, charismatic Lutherans are a voice in the church that should not be overlooked or stamped out, but nurtured and investigated. Their continued role in the

[78] Stendahl, 121.

diverse body of the Lutheran church in the United States is beneficial both to Lutherans and to the wider church.

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This study by Markku Antola proposes the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal was an experience of Christ's real presence in faith. Antola's hypothesis is that the "Christ's real presence in faith" motif provides a compatible structure for the presence of the charismatic experience in Lutheran theology. The main source of Antola's study was the International Lutheran Charismatic Renewal Leader's consultation, published as *Welcom, Holy Spirit*. Antola himself identifies as a "sympathetic observer-participant" of the Lutheran charismatic movement. I intend to use his work as an example of the charismatic renewal integrated in to the greater body of Lutheran theology. It differs from my thesis in that it is purely theological, offering a framework for reconciling the charismatic movement with the Lutheran context.

Cartledge, Mark J. "Charismatic Prophecy: A Definition and Description," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, No. 5 (October 1994): 79-120

Christenson, Larry. *The Charismatic Renewal Among Lutherans*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Lutheran Charismatic Renewal Services, 1976.

This book by Larry Christenson is another resource from the time of the charismatic movement. Christenson's book explores the "distinctive Lutheran contribution" to the charismatic movement that was sweeping through the mainline denominations and the Catholic Church. It's very similar to Jorgenson's book in the ground it covers, however it is distinctive in its pastoral perspective and it is better explains Lutheran charismatic theology and practice to those who intentionally maintained their Lutheran identity.

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Bold in the Spirit is a book from the period of the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal. Published in 1974, this work by Erling Jorstad offers a historical snapshot of many sentiments expressed by those within the charismatic movement when it was at its height. Jorstad recorded many personal stories of Lutherans touched by the charismatic movement, and his purpose for the book was to tell the story of Lutheran charismatics using their voice. As it relates to my thesis, this book is a good resource for general information ranging from statistics to practical theology, as well as offering the concerns and challenges of those in the midst of the movement in order to (hopefully) compare them to those of Lutheran charismatics today. Jorstad, himself a charismatic Lutheran, was a former professor of History at Saint Olaf who taught classes in the area of religious history.

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