

THE FUNCTION OF THE CHARISMATA IN THE  
EARLY CHURCH AND MODERN MISSIONS

by

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## ABSTRACT

### The Function of the Charismata in the Early Church and Modern Missions M.A. Mabry

Few topics generate more debate within evangelicalism than the propriety of the *charismata*. The purpose of this paper is to examine the biblical and historical function of the *charismata* in view of proving that the supernatural gifts of God held a critical missiological function in the early church, and that they also do today. The fastest growing religious movement in the modern age is Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity, going from statistical zero at the dawn of the 20th century to almost 700 million by the end of the century. Such a movement must be assessed, and its methods held up to the light of Scripture (orthodoxy) and the light of history (orthopraxy). This study will proceed by examining this phenomena biblically, historically, critically, and missiologically. The result of the study will demonstrate the the *charismata* were normative in the early church and critical to its missionary strategy, and therefore the *charismata* should be employed in similar fashion today. The outcome of this is a final synthesis of the data in proposing a practical way forward for those on the front lines of ministry as movement leaders, church planters, missionaries, and pastors.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Few topics generate more internecine debate in modern evangelicalism than the *charismata* and their role in the church. Some wish to see the practice of the *charismata* more freely and frequently while others don't believe that such an experience is even possible. In order to spread more light and less heat on this topic, we will examine history—particularly, the history of the expression of the *charismata* in the early church and very modern church. The *charismata* were normative and critical to the life and expansion of the Church in the Apostolic and Post-Apostolic ages. In this paper, I shall argue that the *charismata* should function similarly in modern church life and missions. This paper will attempt to draw a connection from the normative, biblical function of supernatural acts of the Holy Spirit into the church age—particularly the Apostolic and Post-Apostolic eras—and the modern era. To embark on this study, I will begin by drawing out a brief biblical theology of the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments. Taking this approach will allow this study to fit neatly into an historical survey of the theology and practice of the supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit in the earliest ages of the church after the resurrection. This study will then shed light on a survey of the doctrines and practices surrounding the *charismata* in the modern era. It is my sincere hope that such an endeavor will bring more unity and power to Jesus' church as we look forward to the expansion of the gospel into peoples yet unreached and places yet untouched in the generations to come.

Before proceeding further, a word on my method. Some may wonder why I have chosen to limit my study to the period of the early church and (skipping over a millennia and a half) the modern church only. There are two reasons for this. First, the limits of space. Writing a paper cataloguing the missional use of the *charismata* from the Apostles to the present would not be a paper but a book—a *long* book.<sup>1</sup> Second, the importance of comparing the modern church experience to the early church allows the living to test the purity of their practice against the earliest followers of Christ. If, for instance, my study yielded the finding that modern usage of the *charismata* was quite different than that of the early church, it would hardly matter what was done in the centuries in between because the present practice would be plainly different and therefore probably heterodox. We must see that studying the practices of the early church is for practical theology what studying the Scriptures is for systematic theology. Therefore, much can be gained in our practice by studying the early church in light of the modern experience.<sup>2</sup>

Surveying the existing literature on this topic will provide the reader with a context for this author's contribution to the field. In recent years a dramatic increase in the topic of pneumatology has made resources available that simply weren't there just a few decades ago. Michael Green's work, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, may be an exception, in that he acknowledged the *charismata*. This paper would not have been possible without the work of Stanley Burgess (2011) who painstakingly showed the historicity of post-biblical miracles in the

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<sup>1</sup> Fortunately, others have taken up this challenge. Particularly, Stanley Burgess, *Christian Peoples of the Spirit: A Documentary History of Pentecostal Spirituality from the Early Church to the Present*, (New York, NY: NYU Press, 2011.) and Eddie L. Hyatt, *2000 Years Of Charismatic Christianity: A 21st Century Look at Church History from a Pentecostal/Charismatic Perspective*, (Lake Mark, FL: Charisma House, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> In their book *Evangelicals and the Early Church*, George Kalantzis and Andrew Tooley give insight into this idea, saying (1) that studying the early church both confirms and elucidates the New Testament, (2) seeing what noble Christian lives looked like, (3) learning how to distinguish between the cultural/temporal practices of Christians and those which are eternal, and (4) to see how early Christians solved the problems they faced. (pp.132-136) In this study, I'm primarily interested in (4), seeing how the early church overcame those obstacles to their fulfilling the Lord's commands to "go make disciples" and how the *charismata* helped them do just that.

writings of the church fathers. His word does not, however, give any recommendations for the current practice of the *charismata*. Another scholar whose work shaped this study have been the writings of Vinson Synan, whose works on the history of charismatic practice (1997) was also helpful. Additionally, Synan edited a text laying out some of the challenges and opportunities that await the modern Pentecostal/Charismatic movement in the 21st century (2011). As the church advances into a more globalized world, the contributions of Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen and his 2002 book *Christian Peoples of the Spirit* bring a global and ecumenical perspective to bear on pneumatology. Craig Keener's enormous and fascinating book *Miracles* also proved helpful, with its catalogue of biblical miracles. The sheer weight of the evidence marshaled in that book was astounding. Within the context of so much good scholarship on pneumatology as such, the present paper is designed to bridge the gap between historical and theological pneumatology and missiology, as we seek a way forward, given what's come before.

Our study shall proceed in the following way: First, I shall briefly sketch out a broad, biblical theology of supernatural gifts and miracles which attested to God's word. Following that I shall take a moment to define the *charismata*. This will include a brief discussion on tongues, healing, and prophecy, and a short survey of the theological literature around those gifts, their meaning, and purpose. Building on that foundation, attention will then turn to the primary sources of the early church itself to discover how the apostolic fathers, early apologists, and church leaders up to Augustine approached the practice of the *charismata*. We will then turn to the modern age, from just prior to 1900 to the present. The history of the charismatic revival will be explored, and attention will given to the growth of the charismatic movement of the Christian church. I will conclude my paper by proposing a synthesis of my findings and a strategy for mission moving forward.



## CHAPTER 2

### A BRIEF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF SUPERNATURAL GIFTS AND MIRACLES

God has been performing acts of power since creation. Creation itself is an act of God's power. Surprising, then, that so much ink should be spilt over the question of whether or not a God who by a supernatural act (because there was not yet any nature within which to act) created the cosmos might continue to work supernaturally within that cosmos.<sup>1</sup> Simply put, the answer to that question is yes. But it's not enough to see *that* God acts supernaturally. Nor is it enough to see that he does so through created beings like the prophets of old. We must look further to find out why he does so. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen observes, "The Bible presents no systematized outline of the work of the Spirit, anymore than it does of any other systematic topic. It teaches about the Spirit through symbols and stories, and the accent is on the work of the Spirit, in other words, spirituality."<sup>2</sup> We must find the work of the Spirit in the story of the text. Therefore, it is appropriate to briefly sketch out a biblical theology of supernatural gifts given to people, the purpose of these gifts, and the result of their use. What we will discover is that God supernaturally enabled those whom he called upon to accomplish their given mission.

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<sup>1</sup> Though I mean this somewhat ironically, the study of pneumatology and the charismatic gifts has received more attention in the last few decades than it has in the last few centuries. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen writes, "In recent years, one of the most exciting developments in theology has been an unprecedented interest in the Holy Spirit. A pneumatological renaissance concerning the doctrine and spirituality of the Holy Spirit has in these days stirred much interest and even enthusiasm from all theological corners." See Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2002), 11.

<sup>2</sup> Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 23.

### Eden: At Home With God The Spirit

Any discussion of the biblical narrative must start in the beginning, and this one is no different. In the beginning, God created the whole of the cosmos by the Spirit (Gen. 1:2)<sup>3</sup>. His work culminated in the making of the first people and their being set in a sanctuary-garden called Eden. The first man was breathed into by God (2:7) which brought him not only into existence, but enabled him to do the mission for which he was made (1:28). This spirit-man was tasked with the keeping of God's message (2:16) and the doing of God's mission (2:15). In the garden, God would walk in the wind/spirit (surely a picture of the Trinitarian communion in 3:8). However, when Adam and Eve rebel and are cast out of the garden, they lose their place with God and the Spirit/wind of 3:8. This loss of spiritual communion with God forms part of the original ideals of the biblical story, and the mission of restoring spiritual fellowship with his people sets God about the redemption of his people which occupies the rest of the story.

### Moses: Enabled By God

Moses provides one of the earliest instances of the Spirit of God coming upon a person to speak prophetically, perform miraculous signs, and lead the people of God. The account of the call of Moses in Exodus 3 details the call of a man who was neither prepared nor willing to accomplish the mission to which he was about to be called.<sup>4</sup> Despite his inadequate resume, Yahweh appeared to Moses in the burning bush<sup>5</sup> to both announce a promise to bring his people out of bondage and into a land flowing with milk and honey<sup>6</sup> and to call out Moses as the one

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<sup>3</sup> All quotations from the Bible will use The English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

<sup>4</sup> Ex. 3:11.

<sup>5</sup> Ex. 3:6.

<sup>6</sup> Ex. 3:8.

assigned the mission of announcing their promised deliverance.<sup>7</sup> Doubting that the people from whom he had been estranged his whole life will suddenly follow him, he asked the Lord how this will occur. God's response was to give him the power to work signs<sup>8</sup> to verify the "good news" of Israel's coming deliverance. Interestingly, the Pentateuch uses the Hebrew אֵימֹת for "sign,"<sup>9</sup> to describe the miraculous power God would give Moses, instead of a number of other words it could have chosen for "miracle." The LXX confirms this literary decision by using the word σημεῖον "sign," leaving the reader to understand this supernatural empowerment not just to be an act for itself, but a sign pointing to a message beyond the miracle.<sup>10</sup> In other words, God is not just giving Moses power to work miracles, but power to bear witness to a message and to accomplish a mission.

God's empowerment of Moses led to faith on the part of Israel. We're told that as Aaron spoke the words of the Lord (the good news of their coming rescue), "Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped." (Ex. 4:30-31) The result of the proclamation of God's promises accompanied by the

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<sup>7</sup> Ex. 3:14.

<sup>8</sup> Ex. 4:8.

<sup>9</sup> Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver and Charles Augustus Briggs. *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. electronic ed., (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000), 16.

<sup>10</sup> It has been noted that John's gospel makes significant connections with Exodus, suggesting that Jesus is bringing about a new exodus. It is significant, therefore, that if John is copying a pattern of sign-miracles to attest to a message, he must have gotten that idea from his literary source, widely thought to be Exodus. See John Dennis, "The Presence and Function of Second Exodus-Restoration Imagery in John 6" *Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt*. 30 (2005): 105-121. "The consistent and strategic use of exodus-Moses echoes in John 6 suggests that the first exodus provided John with elements that were important in his presentation of Jesus. Imagery such as the expected 'prophet like Moses,' **sign-miracles** . . . show that the day of restoration is here and that Jesus the Messiah, the prophet like Moses par excellence, is now bringing about a second exodus restoration that will lead to eternal life and the restoration of a new community."

demonstration of God's power was faith in the hearts of God's people. The ten plagues wrought by God through Moses were likewise not miracles of brute power, but signs pointing to Yahweh and his message of deliverance.<sup>11</sup>

### The Tabernacle: Building A Place For God By The Spirit's Power

After Moses led Israel out of Egypt, God shortly thereafter commanded that tabernacle be constructed wherein his powerful presence might dwell in the midst of his people. This construction project was not ancillary to God's purposes, but central—God desired to dwell among his people.<sup>12</sup> Such an endeavor was so holy and important that it took a supernatural gifting of God to his people to bring about his will. Exodus 36:1-2 tells us, “Bezalel and Oholiab and every craftsman in whom the LORD has put skill and intelligence to know how to do any work in the construction of the sanctuary shall work in accordance with all that the LORD has commanded. And Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every craftsman in whose mind the LORD had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him up to come to do the work.” That pattern here seems to match what God did through Moses—God supernaturally enabled those whom he called up to accomplish their given mission and testify to the message.

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<sup>11</sup> Ex. 7:3-5. The same word (*ôwth*) is used here and elsewhere in the account of Moses. The result would be that the Egyptians would “know that I am the LORD.” Yahweh is here concerned to give Moses gifts of power to perform signs which point to a message—namely, the message of the sovereignty and lordship of Yahweh. In his commentary, W. Ross Blackburn writes, “The primary purposes of the signs and wonders was not deliverance, but communication, ‘I AM the LORD’”; W. Ross Blackburn, *The God Who Makes Himself Known: The Missionary Heart of the Book of Exodus*, (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012), 41.

<sup>12</sup> “I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.” (Ex 29:45) In order for Israel to live out their story as God's unique people among whom he dwelled, the tabernacling presence of God was central and critical.

But here a development has occurred, because in this account the work of the Spirit is mentioned, specifically. “The LORD said to Moses, “See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft.” (Exodus 31:1-5) It’s worth noting that the phrase “Spirit of God” only occurs five times in the writings of Moses, four of which Moses employs the phrase to explain the source of a supernatural act of power.<sup>13</sup> It is right to conclude, therefore, that God means to accomplish his ends in his people as he acts *through* his people, some of whom will be granted gracious, supernatural abilities toward the accomplishment of his purposes and the attestation of his message.

### The Judges: Small Saviors Empowered By The Spirit

Typically, one does not look to the book of Judges to find the powerful working of the Spirit—at least not first. But study reveals the work of the Spirit throughout a book that chronicles a dark, downward spiral in Israel’s history. The pattern in Judges of apostasy-

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<sup>13</sup> See Gen 1:2, 41:38, Ex. 31:3, 35:31, Num 24:2. The use of this phrase in Genesis denotes God’s act of creation. Gen 41:38 and Num 24:2 both explain the origin of supernatural (prophetic) knowledge and speech from Joseph and Balaam respectively, and the two uses in Exodus explain the origin of the supernatural skill required to build and beautify the tabernacle.

punishment-salvation<sup>14</sup> is always brought to climax through a judge of God's own choosing and empowering.<sup>15</sup> In his commentary on Judges, Block points out:

The expression . . . "the Spirit of the Lord came upon him," is critical for understanding the role of the divinely called deliverers in the Book of Judges and the manner in which Yahweh exercised his power in the Old Testament in general. . . . In the Book of Judges, when . . . "the Spirit of the Lord," comes upon individuals, it signals the arresting presence and power of God, often of individuals who are unqualified for or indisposed to service for him . . . [T]he empowering presence of the Spirit of God transforms [a] minor Israelite office . . . into the ruler of Israel and the conqueror of a world-class enemy.<sup>16</sup>

Take for example the first judge, Othniel. He was "raised up" by God (Judges 3:9) and empowered to defend his people by "The Spirit of the LORD" (Judges 3:1). The text sets up the pattern that the reader comes to expect of the following Judges; they are called by God and empowered by God. Martin notes:

The coming of the Spirit upon Othniel is the only element of the cyclical pattern that is not explicitly named in the prologue; therefore, the hearer might be surprised by this first biblical appearance of the phrase רוח יהוה (The Spirit of the LORD). Reflection upon the spirit in Israel's Torah, however, places Othniel within the trajectory of earlier leaders. That is, in light of the Spirit's empowerment of previous leaders (Joseph, Moses, the seventy, and Joshua), the hearer of Judges might assume . . . that reception of the spirit becomes clearer as the 'mark of God's chosen' leader, and the Spirit's authorization of Othniel positions him in the company of the past heroes of Israel.<sup>17</sup>

Note the pattern that emerges in the chart:

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<sup>14</sup> Dr. Lee Roy Martin makes a convincing case that the prologue of Judges (particularly 2:6-3:6) sets up this pattern in order to illustrate the role the Holy Spirit plays in delivering the people through the judge. See: Lee Roy Martin. "Power to Save? The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Judges." *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16, (2008): 21-50.

<sup>15</sup> While there are some judges (particularly the minor ones) that the writer does not give us direct language "the LORD raised up. . . ." it is worth noting that (1) This language *does* show up for all the major judges, and (2) that even when the language is absent the concept of divine choice and empowerment is not.

<sup>16</sup> Daniel I. Block, *The New American Commentary, vol. 6: Judges, Ruth*, (Nashville, TN: B&H, 1999), 155.

<sup>17</sup> Lee Roy Martin. "Power to Save? The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Judges." *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16, (2008): 27.

Judge	Called by God	Empowered by God
Othniel	" <b>The LORD raised up a deliverer</b> for the people of Israel, who saved them, Othniel the son of Kenaz" (Judges 3:9)	<b>The Spirit of the LORD</b> was upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. And his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim. So the land had rest forty years. (Judges 3:10)
Ehud	" <b>The LORD raised up for them a deliverer</b> , Ehud, the son of Gera." (Judges 3:15)	"Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years." (Judges 3:30)
Shamgar	"After him came Shamgar . . ." Judges 3:31. Note: Here the text at least hints at Shamgar being after the likeness of Ehud (after <i>him</i> ), where "after" can have the meaning of "following." (See Stong's H310)	" . . . he killed 600 Philipstines with an oxgoad." (Judges 3:31) Note: It seems unlikely that the reader is to understand this act as anything other than an act of power given by God. The only biblical heroes who killed more Philistines than that are Samson, Saul, and David
Barak and Deborah	"Now Deborah, <b>a prophetess</b> , the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time." (Judges 4:4) It is clear that as a prophetess, Deborah was called by God.	"So on that day <b>God subdued Jabin</b> the king of Canaan before the people of Israel." (Judges 4:23) Here the work of Deborah and Barak is attributed to the LORD, indicating that his empowering led to their victory.
Gideon	"Now <b>the angel of the LORD came</b> . . . to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor." (Judges 6:11-12)	God gave him a dream (6:25), <b>the Spirit of the LORD clothed him</b> (6:44), showed him the sign of the fleece (6:36-7), and shrunk his army to only 300 men so that the defeat of Midian would be obviously from the LORD (7:19-23). All this culminated in his message, "the LORD will rule over you." (8:23)
Tola and Jair*  (I have not included Abimelech because his status as a judge is questionable)	No scripture references his specific call. But, the language "there arose" in 10:1 and "he judges Israel twenty-three years" in 10:2 indicate that he is to be included in the list of actual judges, unlike Abimelech who sought to seize control of the land like a warlord. The lack of criticism in the text indicates a contrast with Abimelech. No scripture tells of Jair's call, but the linguistic connections are the same, "after him arose . . ." i.e., Shamgar.	The length of his reign after such a volatile political leader indicates God's favor on his reign. The same could be said for Jair, and the additional notation of his wealth and prestige would have indicated to the readers a blessing of God on his life.
Jephthah	Called by the elders of Israel. (11:6)	" <b>The Spirit of the LORD was upon Jephthah</b> . . ." (11:29) and he accomplished a great victory.
Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon	These lesser known judges follow the same pattern set by the account of Tola and Jair.	These lesser known judges follow the same pattern set by the account of Tola and Jair.

Judge	Called by God	Empowered by God
Samson	"And <b>the angel of the LORD</b> appeared to the woman and said to her, "Behold, you are barren and have not borne children, but you shall conceive and bear a son." (13:3) Samson was born by God's special grace.	"Then <b>the Spirit of the LORD</b> rushed upon him . . . " (14:6), "And <b>the Spirit of the LORD</b> rushed upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon and struck down thirty men of the town . . . " (14:19), and "When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him. Then <b>the Spirit of the LORD</b> rushed upon him . . . " God enabled Samson to perform supernatural acts of strength.

What seems striking is that even in the midst of the progressive moral and spiritual depravity that Judges chronicles, God both calls and empowers judges to lead and save his people, bringing them back for a time, and prefiguring the true judge who would be born, called, and empowered by the Spirit for our salvation—Jesus. Kärkkäinen writes:

As a charismatic power, *ruach* can come mightily upon a human being (Judg. 14: 6; 1 Sam. 16: 13) and "clothe" (equip) that person for powerful works (Judg. 6: 34ff.). The very same Spirit also enables human beings to perform supernatural deeds, such as the physical salvation of Israel by the judges (Judg. 3: 10; 6: 34) or visions by the prophets (Ezek. 3: 12; 8: 3; 11: 1). It can even denote the source of the craftsman's skill (Exod. 31: 3) or of any outstanding ability (Dan. 6: 3). The charismatic ministry of the Spirit comes into focus especially in the Book of Judges. . . . <sup>18</sup>

As Martin concludes, "My study has shown that the spirit of Yahweh in Judges functions to authorize and equip God's chosen leaders and to effect salvation."

### The Kings: Leaders Gifted By The Spirit

So far, we've seen that God worked powerfully through his chosen servants to accomplish his mission and bear witness to his message. As the history of redemption progressed, this pattern continued. The calling and equipping of Saul and David are of particular interest when seeking to understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. In 1

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<sup>18</sup> Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective*. (Baker, 2009), 27.



Samuel 10 we find the account of the call of Saul to become king of Israel. Saul is anointed by Samuel to be king, and then given a promise, “as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying. Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man,” (5:5-6). Notice what Samuel is saying, not merely that Saul will have this odd experience of prophesying, but that the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon him and he will be changed. This provides the reader with a literary connection *and* a theological one. Literarily, Saul is being connected to the heroes of Israel, all of whom were empowered by the Spirit.<sup>19</sup> Theologically, this provides us with insight into the emerging pattern of Spirit-given power for the mission of God to those called of God for his work. Of course, the result of Saul’s encounter with the Spirit was the gift of prophecy and later might to lead God’s people.

The call of David is similar to Saul’s. After Saul’s disobedience, Samuel was sent to anoint David, son of Jesse, to be king. In 1 Samuel 16 we read, “Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah. Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him.” (13-14) The literary connection is clear: the same Spirit which rushed upon the heroes of old has now left Saul and “rushed upon” David. His call was clear, and what followed was a miraculous victory over

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<sup>19</sup> “The . . . sign would give him assurance that he had the necessary gifts and abilities for the task of leadership. The ‘judges’ before him had all been equipped for leadership by the gift of *the Spirit of the LORD*, and Saul would recognize that he was being equipped in the same way . . . Saul could have confidence to act as king, because God was clearly be with him”; D. A. Carson, R.T. France, J.A. Motyer, and G.J. Wenham, eds. *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*. 4th ed., (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 306.

Goliath in chapter 17. Once again, the Spirit of the LORD had called and empowered his chosen leaders to do his will and lead his people in his ways.<sup>20</sup>

### The Prophets: The Mouth And Hands Of The Spirit

It almost goes without saying that the ministries of the Old Testament prophets are marked by the calling and miraculous empowering of the Spirit. But for the sake of connecting this biblical-theological theme, discussing the prophets is important. For the sake of brevity, we will limit ourselves to the call and empowering of Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.

Elijah appears rather suddenly in 1 Kings 17. With no phrases like “the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon *x*,” as with the judges and the kings, we see that the prophetic ministry is separate from the kingly one. However, we are told that “the word of the LORD” came to Elijah (17:2), and this phrase sets up a new literary pattern.<sup>21</sup> And when “the word of the LORD” came to Elijah, what followed were a series of miracles. First there was a drought at his word (17:1), the feeding of the widow (17:8), the raising of the dead son (17:24) and the confrontation with the prophets of Ba’al (18:20). Clearly, Elijah was called by the Lord and given a powerful prophetic gift, which lent credibility and demonstrable power to his message—the word of the Lord.

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<sup>20</sup> “To David’s inner qualities, God added something else—the power of his Spirit. David had this gift from yahweh no less than the judges and Saul before him; it was vital to the leadership of the nation. In this general OT context, the function of Yahweh’s Spirit was to equip individuals for military leadership”; Carson, *et al*, 313.

<sup>21</sup> Actually, the phrase, “the word of the LORD” shows up first when God spoke to Abraham in Genesis 15:1, lending to the pattern of this phrase being used to denote the ministry of prophecy early on. Moses was given “the word of the LORD” in Exodus 4:28, and the ministry of Samuel the prophet was denoted by “the word of the LORD” in 1 Samuel 3. These connections create in the reader an expectation of the call and power of a prophet when they show up in the text and are attributed to some new character. In short, when we read this phrase we expect a prophet.

Elisha, Elijah's disciple and successor, was called and anointed in one of the most dramatic ways in the whole biblical story. Elijah was told by God to take Elisha on as his disciple and successor (1 Kings 19:16), and we read the account of his call in the following verses, where Elijah cast his cloak upon Elisha, and Elisha began to study under the prophet.<sup>22</sup> And as his master was taken away and Elisha's training complete, a series of miracles followed which surrounded his investiture with the office of the prophet.<sup>23</sup> The drama of this narrative draws the reader's attention to the power of both the call of God on Isaiah's life and in his ministry. This story, and the rest of the account of Elisha's ministry, works in the same way as the Lord calls his worker, Elisha, and gives him spiritual power to accomplish the mission he has set out for him.

The call of Isaiah is given in the sixth chapter of the book bearing his name. Here we find Isaiah engulfed in a vision of the throne room of Yahweh. Visions of God's greatness abound, with flaming angels, antiphonal praise, and smoke which filled the throne room. The call of Isaiah comes from the LORD in the form of a question, "Whom shall I send, who will go for us?" (6:8). At this point, Isaiah responds, "Here I am, send me," (6:8b). The dramatic nature of his calling is clear, but stepping back we see both a similar pattern emerge and new features of calling develop. The same pattern of calling in the form of "the word of the LORD" coming to Isaiah can be found in 2 Kings 20:4. But what is recorded there is demonstrated in Isaiah 6 where "the word of the LORD" comes to Isaiah in this vision. God's literal, spoken words come to his ears, but not before dealing with Isaiah's sin, (6:7). This is the first time that the individual

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<sup>22</sup> One can't help but think of verses like Luke 24:29, "And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." Where Jesus is our greater Elijah and the Spirit is a garment of greater anointing and power than the cloak.

<sup>23</sup> Chapter 2 is lined with miraculous events: Prophets telling Elisha that Elijah would leave (2:3), parting of the waters (2:6), chariots of fire (2:11), and another parting of the waters (2:14). Thus one can see the power of the spirit following the calling of Elisha.

sin of one of God's chosen prophets is mentioned, particularly as a problem to be overcome.<sup>24</sup>

After this vision, Isaiah is invited to respond to the call to be on God's mission of "going for us" and speaking his words to the world. And this is what Isaiah does. His ministry is also accompanied by miraculous power.<sup>25</sup>

The opening lines of Jeremiah's prophecy state that he was the one "to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah," (Jer 1:2). It is perhaps worth noting that the office of prophet was neither chosen nor natural for Jeremiah, as he was the son of a priest. In the normal course of events, this is the role that Jeremiah would have assumed.<sup>26</sup> But when "the word of the LORD" came to him, he was called into a new vocation with the very same words that were so typical of the prophet's call.<sup>27</sup> Thus, his call fits the pattern. But here, perhaps, one may detect a failure in the pattern I am suggesting. After all, Jeremiah most notably did *not* work any miraculous signs. What, then, of my hypothesis that that God supernaturally enabled those whom he called up to accomplish their given mission? I suggest it holds here, because the gift we observe in Jeremiah *is* the gift of prophecy. In his case, his prophecies were fulfilled. Take just for example what he said about Messiah. He would be a descendent of David (23:5-6), Messiah would be God (23:5-6), Messiah would be both God and man (23:5-6c), that the Messiah would bring about a new covenant (31:31), etc. God worked powerfully in Jeremiah to call him and grant him a supernatural, prophetic gift to bear witness to the message and advance the mission of God.

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<sup>24</sup> This is a feature of the ministry of a new covenant believer that we will return to as we develop this biblical-theological perspective of supernatural gifts.

<sup>25</sup> Isaiah healed Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:16), causes the sun to move backwards (2 Kings 20:11), and of course he lived and worked as a prophet.

<sup>26</sup> Carson, *et al*, 675.

<sup>27</sup> *cf.* Ho. 1:1, Joel 1:1, Ezk. 1:3, Mi. 1:1

The Promises: Prophetic Insights  
About The Future Of The Spirit

It is worth taking a moment to explore those prophecies that speak specifically to the issue at hand. I'll first highlight a passage that is not often used in the discussion of the *charismata*. But we shall see that it should be.

An often overlooked utterance of Moses is found in Number 11:29 where he says, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!" The immediate context is fascinating. The Spirit of the Lord came to rest on Eldad and Medad, and a young man thought this might have been a threat to Moses' leadership. Moses' response was just the opposite of what the boy expected—he was glad, and wished that everyone could and would do likewise. I only mention this here because we're studying the Bible as a literary whole, and this passage as the effect of literary foreshadowing.<sup>28</sup> Moses, the typological prophet of the OT, has expressed a desire that (in my view) illustrates the desire of Yahweh when he inspires a text like Isaiah 59:20b-21, which says:

"And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the Lord. "And as for me, this is my covenant with them," says the Lord: "My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring," says the Lord, "from this time forth and forevermore."

Here, Isaiah is coming to the culmination of a prophecy of salvation coming for God's people. And in addition to the promise for rescue from their enemies, God promises that those who turn from sin will not merely have the spirit upon them (i.e., the cloak of Elijah upon Elisha), but *within* them. And critically, the time frame for this promise is, "from this time forth and forevermore." This prophecy is one of the most invoked by the writers of the New

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<sup>28</sup> Grudem notes that "at several points the Old Testament looks forward to a time when there would be a greater empowering of the Holy Spirit that would reach to all of God's people"; Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press: 1994), 1017.

Testament, being referenced in Acts 2:39, and directly or indirectly referenced by scores of other passages.<sup>29</sup> Thus the content of this promise is contained in many much more familiar new covenant passages in the NT.<sup>30</sup> It seems here that God is saying that the indwelling presence and power of the spirit will mark the people of God forever in the new covenant.<sup>31</sup>

Another famous promise given in the Old Testament comes from Joel 2:28-29, which reads, “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.” Christians everywhere agree that this prophecy was fulfilled in a moment at Pentecost. But, not all Christians agree that the promises contained in this verse are still in effect.<sup>32</sup> It seems, however, that the prophecies of the Old Testament themselves do not even so much as hint at a cessation of the promises contained therein. Rather, these promises teach that the gifts of the

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<sup>29</sup> cf John 14:26; 2 Cor. 3; Heb. 8, 9, 12; 1 Jn 2:27.

<sup>30</sup> Dr. Mark Ruthven notes, “because the content of the New Covenant (Isa 59:21, cited in Acts 2:39) is the transfer of the prophetic spirit from Jesus to his ‘children and their children’s children forever.’ This immediate revelation into the heart is also the content of the more familiar, and also permanently binding, New Covenant passages cited in the New Testament”; Jon Mark Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata: The Protestant Polemic on Post-biblical Miracles*, (Tulsa, OK: Word and Spirit Press, 2011), xxi-xxiii.

<sup>31</sup> Ruthven makes the case that, “the central message of Acts is not Protestant soteriology, or even the enhancement of Protestant soteriology by more charismatic power, but rather, the message is that the core emphasis of scripture—its very goal—is the restoration to mankind of immediate, prophetic revelation. This experience of ongoing prophetic revelation fulfills the Old and New Covenants (the promise of immediate revelation of God to ‘all flesh’).” While I am not persuaded of his conclusion that the whole goal of the gospel is “the restoration of immediate, prophetic revelation,” I do find his argument awakening enough to see that as *part* of the goal of the gospel. It goes to show the way some scriptural promises such as this one might be overlooked because of a presuppositional bias toward viewing the gospel as merely the answer to the question, “how much does it cost to get to Heaven?”; Jon Mark Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata: The Protestant Polemic on Post-biblical Miracles*, (Tulsa, OK: Word and Spirit Press, 2011), xx-xxiii.

<sup>32</sup> It is beyond the scope of this paper to engage the cessationist/continuationist debate. I am not convinced by the cessationist argument, but share the concerns of my cessationist brethren that the continuationists may, at times, be given to excesses that are unhealthy and muddy the clear presentation of the gospel. However, I am arguing in this paper that the *charismata* are not only still in effect, but critical to the mission of gospel advance.

Spirit are to be poured out upon all eschatological generations who believe, beginning with those in the New Testament era<sup>33</sup> Such a promise of the timeless giving of the Spirit seems to also be in view in Ezekiel when he writes, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you and I will remove the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes” (36:26-28).

### Jesus: The First Man Of The Spirit

As the biblical story continues, Jesus takes center stage in the drama of redemption. Coming as a baby born to a virgin, he grows up in obscurity as a faithful, first-century, Palestinian Jew. So far we have seen an obvious literary pattern arise—that the chosen servants of God were both called by God and given dramatic, supernatural power from God toward the accomplishment of his mission and the spreading of his message. We’ve also seen a promise arise—that God would one day come himself as to save us and give his Spirit to his people, resulting in powerful gifts and personal transformation. In this section I am arguing that Jesus Christ is the prototype of the Spirit-called, the Spirit-empowered man. I will advance this idea through six observations: (1) Jesus is the fulfillment of the Spirit-empowered biblical heroes—the hero to whom all the previous heroes point, (2) Jesus brings the fulfillment of the promises of the Spirit, (3) Jesus executed his ministry from the calling of the Spirit and through the power of the Spirit, (4) Jesus promised his followers would fulfill their mission in the power of the Spirit, just as he did, (5) Jesus enjoined his disciples *not* to go about the mission without the power of the Spirit, and (6) Jesus was raised through the power of the Spirit.

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<sup>33</sup> Ruthven, xxiii.

First, Jesus is the fulfillment of the best of the biblical heroes. Our biblical-theological survey began by sketching out the great heroes of the OT, with a particular emphasis on the way God both supernaturally called them and empowered them to testify to the message of God and advance the mission. When we read the opening pages of Luke's gospel, for example, we quickly find Jesus intentionally placing himself squarely in that tradition. As Jesus began his ministry one of his first acts was to walk into the temple, take out Isaiah's scroll, read Isaiah 61:1-2, and declare, "Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing it." (Luke 4:21) What was Jesus doing? He read aloud, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. . . ." and among all the other things that he was saying here, he was also placing himself squarely in the tradition of those people who had come before him upon whom the Spirit came. Just as Moses, Othniel, Saul, David, Isaiah, and all the rest of the heroes had been anointed by the Spirit, so now has the Spirit come upon Jesus. Yet, the Spirit has rested upon him in a different way. In John's gospel we're told that not only had Jesus been anointed by the Spirit, but that the Spirit came upon him in the form of a dove and remained. (John 1:32) The remaining of the Spirit makes Jesus similar but different than the OT kings, judges, and deliverers. For, the Spirit never found need to alight from Christ.<sup>34</sup> Space does not permit to expand on the other notable connections Christ makes with OT heroes, showing himself to be the truer, better vision to which they all were but foreshadows and signs. But suffice it to say at this point that Jesus clearly and consciously connected himself to this line of prophets, priests, and kings, and in himself become the fulfillment of them all.

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<sup>34</sup> Not a few teachers have taken the remaining of the Spirit upon Jesus to at least hint at the fact that Spirit is to remain upon his people—a soft but interest rebuttal to the cessationist idea that the miracle-working Spirit has changed his dispensation. R.T. Kendall notes, "He was not only to see the Spirit come down as a dove; this dove would "remain" on Him. In fact, the word remain is mentioned two times in John 1:32–33. . . . The gifts of the Spirit are constant—you get to keep them"; R.T. Kendall, *Holy Fire: A Balanced, Biblical Look at the Holy Spirit's Work in Our Lives*, (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2014), 92.



Second, we will notice that Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophecies which speak of the Spirit coming to God's people. Of course Jesus was called by the Spirit and born by an act of the Spirit.<sup>35</sup> We early read the prophecy of Isaiah in 59:20-21, "'My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring,' says the Lord, 'from this time forth and forevermore.'" The question rises, to whom is God speaking? Is it to Isaiah? To God's people? It seems clear he is not speaking to Isaiah, since the context is a long prophetic discourse to Israel. Possibly he is speaking to the "redeemer" of v. 20. But given NT data, the only one upon whom the Spirit came, remained, and who had offspring (for, Isaiah had no children and Israel could not be described as a people who had been given the Spirit) this prophecy can only have been fulfilled in Jesus—the one upon whom the Spirit remained *and* the one who Isaiah has already mentioned as having offspring.<sup>36</sup> Jesus is the suffering servant upon whom the Spirit would dwell, the one whose offspring would be marked by a filling with the spirit and an access to the prophetic word.<sup>37</sup>

The third line of reasoning supporting the claim that Jesus is typological spirit-called and spirit-empowered man is in the way he executed his ministry as from the power of the Holy Spirit. I was often taught in my Sunday school days that Jesus performed the great miracles of healing, raising the dead, casting out demons, and the like because he was the Son of God. As

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<sup>35</sup> Here I am connecting Jesus' miraculous birth and the Spirit coming upon him in his baptism with the pattern we have been observing, that God's calling and equipping of his servants is a supernatural act of the Holy Spirit. In Christ, we see the same pattern, *par excellence*.

<sup>36</sup> See Isaiah 53:10.

<sup>37</sup> Messiah will inaugurate His covenant (elsewhere called the New Covenant, Jer. 31:31), pouring His Spirit on believing Israelites (cf. Ezek. 36:27a; Joel 2:29) and instilling His words within them (Jer. 31:33–34; Ezek. 36:27b); John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, vol. 1, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1114.

God, he could do what he wanted. The Scriptures, however, seem to nuance the source of Jesus' miraculous power rather differently. Jesus is the one anointed by the Spirit (Matt. 1:16, John 1:32), who himself said he cast demons out by the Spirit (12:28), was called the one who would bring the baptism of the Spirit (Mark 1:8), returned from a time of fasting in the desert full of the Spirit (Luke 4:1), said he spoke from the Holy Spirit (John 6:63), and when commission his disciples breathed on them to receive the Holy Spirit (John 20:22). It seems clear that what Jesus did miraculously, he did because of his dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Reformed Christians have often looked at the life of Jesus Christ as an example of true Christian piety.<sup>38</sup> It seems sensible, therefore, to conclude that Jesus also provides an example of the first truly spiritual life—one that is marked by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. Or put differently, if Jesus is setting up a pattern which all Christians everywhere understand should be repeated (e.g., sacraments, moral behavior, speech, lifestyle, etc.) why would we assume that his strategy should not be embraced—a strategy that was empowered by the Holy Spirit and marked by supernatural acts?

Fourth and furthermore, Jesus actually promised his people would minister in the Spirit with supernatural effect. In John 14:12 Jesus makes this promise to his disciples, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.” The immediate context is in the discussion of the sending of the Holy Spirit (14:15-16). It seems only sensible to understand that Jesus' promise to

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<sup>38</sup> “Scripture puts much emphasis on the example of Christ . . . and the examples of the characters in biblical narrative”; John Frame. *Systematic Theology*, (Philadelphia, PA: P&R, 2013), 993.

his disciples meant that they would walk in the same kinds of great works which he did, and more.<sup>39</sup>

Fifth, Jesus expressly commanded his disciples *not* to do the work of ministry without the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, expressed in the now familiar-sounding phrase, “clothed with power from on high.” (Luke 24:49) Just as the work of creation was a work that involved the Spirit, so would the work of new creation. And, just as Adam couldn’t come alive to the work of God without the breath of God, neither can those sons and daughters of the second Adam.

Finally, Jesus mission was culminated in his resurrection. After he gave up his Spirit, he embraced death in the place of sinful humanity.<sup>40</sup> But on Easter morning, Jesus was raised by the power of the Spirit. Paul seems to understand the implications of this fact for those of us who are united to Christ by faith when he writes, “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.” (Rom 8:11) Indeed, Paul seems to think that the great power that is available through the Spirit to the believer is the same power through the same

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<sup>39</sup> Carson has a helpful insight into the nature of this verse, “anyone who has faith in Jesus (*ho pisteuōn eis eme*—an expression that embraces all believers, not just the apostles) will enjoy. The promise is staggering: the person with such faith, Jesus says, will do what I have been doing. Indeed, he will do even greater things than these— not because he is greater, but because I am going to the Father. The things (*erga*, ‘works,’ cf. v. 11) Jesus has been doing, and the greater things that follow, cannot legitimately be restricted to deeds of humility (13: 15) or acts of love (13: 34– 35), still less to proclamation of Jesus’ ‘words’ (v. 10). Jesus’ ‘works’ may include more than his miracles; they never exclude them. . . . By contrast, *the works believers are given to do through the power of the eschatological Spirit*, after Jesus’ glorification, will be set in the framework of Jesus’ death and triumph, and will therefore more immediately and truly reveal the Son. Thus greater things is constrained by salvation-historical realities”; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John: Pillar New Testament Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 494-6.

<sup>40</sup> 2 Cor. 5:21.

Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead.<sup>41</sup> All things considered, Jesus Christ shows himself to be the ultimate new spirit-man, called out by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit, and on a mission to—through his life, death, and resurrection—enable those who follow him in faith to be called out and filled with the same Spirit and the advance of his mission.

### The Apostolic Mission: The Power Of The Spirit

John Stott famously taught that the book of Acts was the story of Jesus' church being overwhelmed by the Spirit and thrust out into mission.<sup>42</sup> That seems to be an accurate description of Acts 1-4. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the church, according to Jesus's promise.<sup>43</sup> As a newer, better temple, the church now takes its place as the locus of God's presence on the Earth in his Spirit, and a the center of mission in the world. G. K. Beale makes this connection explicit, saying:

The same manner in which God's presence comes to fill the Old Testament tabernacle and temple and the 'house' in Acts 2:2 enhances the plausibility that Luke is describing Pentecost as the time when the new temple emerged. When Moses finished constructing the tabernacle, 'the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle' (Exodus 40:34), and when Solomon finished building his temple, 'the cloud filled the house of the Lord . . . [and] the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord' (see 1 Kgs 8:6-13). In the light of what we have said so far about Acts 2 narrating an inauguration of a new heavenly temple on earth, Acts 2:2-3 may include the Exodus 40 and 1 Kings texts in its quarry of Old Testament allusions: 'there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house . . . and there appeared to

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<sup>41</sup> In Eph. 1:17-20 Paul wrote, "I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, **may give you the Spirit of wisdom** and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is **the immeasurable greatness of his power** toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might **that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead** and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places."

<sup>42</sup> John Stott. *The Message of Acts*, (London: IVP, 1994), 5.

<sup>43</sup> *cf.* John 14:15-17, 26; John 15:26; Luke 24:29; Acts 1:5-8.

them tongues as of fire distributing themselves. . . .<sup>44</sup>

If Beale is right, then this provides strong evidence that the Holy Spirit was treating the church in the same way he treated the temple. A new, eschatological temple was appearing on the scene—a heavenly people that would also function as the new temple, the very dwelling place of the Spirit. Luke makes the connection unbreakable between the temple and the rapidly expanding New Testament church. The events at Pentecost go a good way to remind the reader of Acts that a newer, better kind of temple has come. It's as though he was saying, "Remember how the glory of the Lord filled the temple in Solomon's days? Well now his Spirit has filled the church." Indeed, in the Old Testament, God dwelt among his people, but only within the temple. In the new covenant the people of God are the temple, and God dwells among the world by dwelling within them.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, Acts is replete with demonstrations of the power of God through the new temple, the church. Miracles of healing (10:34-43, 14:8-10, 16:16-18, et. al.) rescue (12:11), and various other examples of God's power dwelling within and coming through the new temple-church are so extensive as to be impossible to explore much here. Suffice it to say that the temple-church connection implies that power for the mission of God is not only made available to the eschatological church, but is essential to it, just as the glory and power of God were essential to the temple of the Old Testament.

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<sup>44</sup> G. K. Beale, "The Descent of the Eschatological Temple in the Form of the Spirit at Pentecost: Part 2: Corroborating Evidence," *Tyndale Bulletin* 56, 2 (2005): 64.

<sup>45</sup> Hamilton, J.M. *God's Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments*, New American Commentary Series in Bible and Theology (Nashville: B&H, 2006) 160. There has been a good deal of study on the Temple theme in the book of Acts. McKelvey provides a good summary of this work when he says, "the apostle [Luke] evidently understands God's presence in the church as much more than a type of the divine indwelling in the old sanctuary or the fulfillment of the prophecy that God would again dwell with his people after the exile, for he supplements the LXX verb 'walk among' with the much stronger verb 'live in.' In other words, God no longer dwells *with* his people in a sanctuary they make for him; he dwells *in* them, and *they* are his temple"; R.J. McKelvey, *New Temple: The Church in the New Testament*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 95.

As the shift in the new covenant is made from God dwelling with/upon his chosen servants to dwelling in his church, the strategy for ministry shifted as well. The ministry of the New Testament church looks much more like the ministry of Jesus that, say, one of the heroes of the Old Testament. Instead of slaying enemies through miraculous military victory, the church wins their enemies through miraculous acts of power. Particular among these acts of power are speaking in other tongues, healing, and prophecy. Famously, tongues (*glossalalia*) were a feature of the Spirit's being poured out at Pentecost in Acts 2. Strategically, however, it was this sign-miracle which enabled the gospel to be heard in the various languages represented at that moment. At Pentecost God gathered the nations to hear about His redemptive work through Peter's sermon. God delivered His gospel declaration to the masses and His Spirit upon those who believed in Christ. Philip Nation and Ed Stetzer note the missiology import of this saying:

When the Spirit came, people spoke in other tongues, but they heard everything in one voice. Babel had been the place where God divided language and Jerusalem was now the place where the nations heard God's redemption in one voice. From the linguistic miracle in Jerusalem, they are sent "out from" Jerusalem.<sup>46</sup>

Luke seems to have underlined this account as the undoing of Babel and the sending out of the disciples. Peter and the other disciples, now filled with the Spirit, acted in the power of the Spirit<sup>47</sup> to bear witness to the gospel message and to demonstrate the power of the promised, eschatological age which was now breaking forth into the present. The results was certainly positive—a megachurch was birthed as the result of the Spirit empowered preaching of the word and the demonstration of the sign. Healing and prophetic insight also play a crucial strategic role

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<sup>46</sup> Ed Stetzer and Philip Nation, ed, *The Mission of God. Mission as Linguistic Thread in Scripture*. (Nashville, TN: Lifeway, 2015), 199.

<sup>47</sup> Hamilton notes that the gift of tongues was not merely limited to the Apostles, but "It seems that Luke means to indicate that the 120 received the Spirit and spoke in tongues (Acts 1:15; 2:1). The group is only limited to the twelve when Peter stands up to address the crowd (2:14)"; Hamilton, Jr., 177.

in the forward advance of the church, but the nature of this strategy will be explored in detail later.

The mission of the church of making disciples, teaching obedience, and bringing more and more people into the new temple community of the church was marching forward powerfully throughout Acts. For now, the pattern has been satisfactorily observed: the gospel advanced in Acts as Spirit-filled disciples of Christ demonstrated power and faithfully proclaimed the gospel. Ladd expounds on the Spirit's role in building and growing the church, saying:

The pentecostal tongues have a symbolic significance, and suggest that this new event in redemptive history is designed for the whole world and would unite people of diverse tongues in a new unity of the *ekklesia*. The Spirit came first to the Jewish believers, then to the Samaritan believers, then to Gentiles, and finally to a little group of disciples of John the Baptist. These four comings of the Spirit mark the four strategic steps in the extension of the *ekklesia* and teach that there is but one *ekklesia* into which all converts . . . are baptized.<sup>48</sup>

### Revelation: The Future With The Spirit

We come to the end of this biblical theological study by noting the nature of the Holy Spirit in the Bible's final book, Revelation. If my thesis that the *charismata* should be a critical part of the strategy of God's people today to take the gospel to the nations, then we might expect the power of the Spirit to play a role in the Apocalypse—and it does. Three features of the book of Revelation give insight into the role of the Spirit in our biblical-theological survey: the new heavens and the earth as the realization of the Spirit's givenness, the final destruction of evil as the eschatological fulfillment of the sign-miracles, and the prophetic nature of the Spirit in the book as an indication for the life of the church.

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<sup>48</sup> George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 385.

First, we will note that Revelation 20-22 pictures the consummated state of the world where God dwells fully with his people. Although it may not be immediately apparent, God's presence on the earth is especially significant for understanding the meta-story of the Bible.<sup>49</sup> The cry, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God" (Rev. 21:3b-4), makes a connection for the reader that the eschatological role of the Spirit's givenness to the church is not an end in itself. Rather, the power and presence of the Spirit in the NT church point to the coming future of the presence with the Trinity in full, unbridled experience. The imagery of Revelation does this as well. God will be so fully with his people that the new creation has no need of sun or stars (Rev. 21:1). The New Jerusalem is a huge, golden cube, as the holy of holies was also a cube.<sup>50</sup> Thus, the New Jerusalem is the ultimate grace-gift to which the *charismata* of the Spirit in the church point. Just as God visits his people powerfully in the *charismata* and shows his kingdom breaking forth, these *charismata* point to a future where God's kingdom has been fully realized.

The presence of God is not the only eschatological message of the sign gifts of the New Testament. The gift of healing is one which is eschatological in nature because it foretells the

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<sup>49</sup> T.D. Alexander. *From Eden to New Jerusalem*, (Leicester, England: Kregel Academic, 2008), 15.

<sup>50</sup> "Interestingly . . . the proportions of the city match those of the Holy of Holies . . . The New Jerusalem also resembles the Holy of Holies in that both are made of gold. While, according to 1 Kings 6:20, the inner sanctuary was overlaid with gold, Revelation 21:8 records that the city was of pure gold. As golden cubes, the Holy of Holies and New Jerusalem are clearly connected. Since God dwells inside both of these structure, we may reasonably conclude that the entire New Jerusalem is an expanded Holy of Holies"; Alexander, 20.



coming destruction of sin, Satan, and demons in the reversal of the curse.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, the instances of healing in the book of Acts, for example, are all pointing to that moment that John tells us will certainly happen in Revelation 20:7-10—Satan and all the foes of God will be finally defeated.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the book of Revelation related to this discussion is the way the references to the Spirit can be viewed as both prophetic and universal.<sup>52</sup> For example, the book of Revelation is a book of prophecy—one which is directed to (a) the seven churches in Asia mentioned in 1:4, and secondarily to (b) The Church universal. Thus, when John is speaking prophetically to the churches he will ground his authority in the phrase, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”<sup>53</sup> However, the Spirit also seems to empower the church as a universal prophetic instrument of God in the world. Jan du Rand points out this feature when in his writing on Rev 19:10, which reads,

“I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.”

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<sup>51</sup> Grudem notes this powerfully in his lectures on his *Systematic Theology* when he instructs his students to, when they pray for the sick, pray as Jesus taught them to pray, ‘thy kingdom come.’ He will say, “When praying for healing, we’re simply asking God to do in this moment what he has already promised to do in the future—to give us perfect, working, healthy new bodies that don’t ever get sick. We’re just praying for that promise to be answered now.” For more on this, see Wayne Grudem. "Systematic Theology: The Doctrine of Miracles, parts 1-3." Sunday School Lecture, Phoenix Bible Church, 5 May, 2010, Phoenix.

<sup>52</sup> Jan A. Du Rand, “‘Let Him Hear What the Spirit Says. . . .’ The Functional Role and Theological Meaning of the Spirit in the Book of Revelation,” *Ex Auditu* 12 (1996): 43.

<sup>53</sup> “The role of the Spirit in the prophetic message to the Church is further illustrated by the seven occurrences of “the Spirit” in the messages to the seven churches (2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22). In every one of the messages the proclamation formula reads: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” In this expression the emphasis falls on the authority of the words of the exalted Christ which are to be obeyed”; Du Rand, 45.

He argues that in testifying the gospel of Jesus, the church is to function as a supernaturally empowered witness to bear prophetic revelation to the world.<sup>54</sup> He summarizes his study of Revelation by saying:

This is the prophetic witness of the Church, and to equip the Church for its mission, the Spirit as agent of visionary experience works through the Christian prophets within the Church. Both activities of the Holy Spirit are the witness of Jesus and the word of God, and both fulfill the indispensable role of conquering. The Spirit conquers the Church to be God's eschatological people in their prophetic witness, and the seven Spirits enable the Church to fulfill its prophetic ministry to the world, convincing the nations of God's kingship on earth as it is in heaven.<sup>55</sup>

### Summary

This brief biblical theological survey of the role of the Holy Spirit has brought us to at least two conclusions, one narrative and one theological. Theologically, the pattern develops early and often that the Spirit is the agent who calls the men of God to into service and empowers the same men for mission. Narratively, the Bible speaks of the Spirit as the present, with-ness of God in the world. In the Garden, the Spirit was the creator, the wind, and the very breath of God. For the heroes of the Old Testament, He was the agent of their calling and the source of their miraculous power. Yet, he did not dwell in them, but only with them through the features of the Tabernacle and the Temple. In Christ we see for the first time in the biblical meta-story human life the way it was meant to be lived, in the abiding power and presence of the Spirit. Through the sacrifice of Christ, the church inherits his life with the Spirit, and comes to be

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<sup>54</sup> "The witness Jesus bore (subjective genitive) is the content of the Spirit-guided prophecy. John's "testimony for the churches" (22:16, 20), in essence the word of God, is the words to which Jesus bore witness during his earthly life. Not only the prophets, but the faithful in general, called brothers in 19:10, bear this witness. Therefore, it seems clear that a prophetic role is attributed to the whole Church. The Spirit inspires Christian prophecy which is addressed to the churches and which enables the members to continue the testimony Jesus bore through their obedience. Strictly taken, this prophetic witnessing still happens within the Church"; Du Rand, 46.

<sup>55</sup> Du Rand, 58.

fully and powerfully indwelt by the Spirit. The church in the world is meant to be a newer better Temple where God's Spirit both dwells and dramatically empowers the mission of God in the earth, and a living symbol of the world to come—in both miracle and message—which will be so fully and powerfully saturated by God that the signs finally cease because that to which they all were always pointing has finally arrived.

## CHAPTER 3

### DEFINING THE *CHARISMATA* AND LIMITING THE SCOPE OF THIS STUDY

Schweitzer remarked that, “Long before the Spirit was a theme of doctrine, He was a fact in the experience of the community.”<sup>1</sup> This fact of experience has now come spark a good bit of controversy, and the three most controversial gifts of the Spirit in the modern church also happen to be those *charismata* which I will argue should be embedded in the strategy of the church. Because of this contention, it is immediately necessary that we define the terms. The word *charismata* literally means, “free gifts,” and can be defined simply as special gifts granted to believers.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of these gifts of grace is for both (1) edification of the church, and (2) the fulfillment of the mission of the church.<sup>3</sup> This concurs with Grudem’s definition of the *charismata* as any gift or ability given by the Spirit for ministry in the church.<sup>4</sup> Some limit the discussion of *charismata* to only those “supernatural” gifts,<sup>5</sup> but this becomes problematic both

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<sup>1</sup> Eduard Schweizer, “πνεύμα,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed., Kittel, Gerhard, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 6: 396.

<sup>2</sup> Allen C. Myers. *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1987), 202.

<sup>3</sup> D. R. W. Wood and I. Howard Marshall. *New Bible Dictionary*. 3d ed., (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1130.

<sup>4</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press: 1994), 1016.

<sup>5</sup> Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (Los Angeles, CA: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1983), 347-348.

theologically and philosophically,<sup>6</sup> since the Scriptures list the so-called supernatural gifts right alongside the gifts which seem to our eyes far more mundane.<sup>7</sup> We can safely synthesize the many closely related definitions in the broad corpus of literature on the topic by saying that the *charismata* are free gifts from God to his people for their good and the accomplishment of the mission.<sup>8</sup>

Even though the Scriptures don't make any hard distinctions between one group of charisms and another<sup>9</sup> in our practical experience *we* often do. Some have, for instance, made a distinction between the supernatural and natural gifts.<sup>10</sup> Nowhere is this non-existent distinction more obvious than in the internecine cessationist/continuationist debate. For the purposes of this study, I am not engaging in that debate. Not only is a thesis of this type too short to adequately deal with that topic, but it has already been satisfactorily engaged in by others far more qualified.<sup>11</sup> This debate is also increasingly becoming anachronistic as the church expands to the

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<sup>6</sup> Frame notes, "The English term . . . has ambiguities"; John Frame, *Systematic Theology*, (Philadelphia: P&R, 2013), 124-126.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 12:28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor 12:8-10; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 7:7.

<sup>8</sup> The mission I constantly refer to is the command in Matthew 28:28-20, "Go make disciples of all nations. . . ."

<sup>9</sup> I agree with Grudem wholeheartedly when he writes, "The point of this analysis is to caution us against making a supernatural/ natural distinction in our minds whereby we think that some gifts are "supernatural" and some gifts are simply "natural." The Bible makes no such distinction. . . . If we do this we will fail to see God's hand in the working of all the gifts and fail to thank him for all of them. On the other hand, the misleading supernatural/ natural distinction could also cause us to be very suspicious about those which we think to be "supernatural," or could lead us to think that they are very unlikely to happen in our own experience. In that case, we would tend to emphasize the gifts we thought to be "natural" and have a very low degree of expectation or faith regarding anything which we thought to be "supernatural." In contrast to this perspective, Scripture says that "all" the gifts are worked in us by the same Holy Spirit, the same Lord, and the same God (1 Cor. 12: 4-6). The worldview of Scripture is one of continuity. . . ."; Grudem, 1027.

<sup>10</sup> Most notably, the work of John McArthur makes a distinction between those gifts which are supposedly in operation today and those that are not. See: John McArthur, *Strange Fire: The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship*. (Nashville, TN: Nelson) 2013.

<sup>11</sup> I think that Grudem, Ruthven, Kendall, Keener, and others whose prominent works can be found in the bibliography of this paper deal with this debate very well.

global south and east.<sup>12</sup> But for the purposes of this paper, I will assume this distinction of natural v. supernatural because it is precisely where my thesis—that the practice of the *charismata* must become part of a comprehensive, global strategy for mission in the world—rubs. Though, I must state again that this distinction is wholly arbitrary and nowhere to be found in the Scripture. But, distinction in hand, let us define the three most controversial “supernatural” charisms more accurately.

### Tongues

The gift of tongues is probably the strangest of all the charisms listed in Scripture. Grudem defines the gifts as “prayer or praise spoken in syllables not understood by the speaker.”<sup>13</sup> Sounding like an odd thing to do makes one wonder, why do it? What is the nature of the gift and what is it foretells? The Greek word used simply means “tongue” (as in the body part) or “language,”<sup>14</sup> and it has to do with those manifestations of speech which take three forms or applications.<sup>15</sup> First, tongues may be a gift of grace given to bridge a language barrier.<sup>16</sup> This

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<sup>12</sup> Because the momentum of the church’s missionary expansion is in the global south and east, and since this is a frontier in which miracles are a far more “normal” part of life, the question about the continuation of the *charismata* is far less important. For more on this see: Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford, 2011). He writes, “Making all allowances for generalization, then, global South Christians retain a strong supernatural orientation. . . . For the foreseeable future, though, the dominant theological tone of emerging world Christianity is traditionalist, orthodox, and supernatural,” (p. 9, 11).

<sup>13</sup> Grudem, 1070.

<sup>14</sup> Gerhard Kittel, et. al., *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1964), 719.

<sup>15</sup> Grudem sees only two forms of the gift: words uttered in prayer or praise which are interpreted (like Acts 2 or 1 Cor 14:2-28); See Grudem, 1071. Duffield and Van Cleeve see two also, but the distinction lies between “tongues of men” and “tongues of angels”; See Duffield and Van Cleeve, 337. I see three uses for the gift of tongues, and therefore make that distinction differently than they.

<sup>16</sup> Though he only makes two initial distinctions, Grudem agrees saying, “Are tongues known human languages then? Sometimes this gift may result in speaking in a human language that the speaker has not learned, but ordinarily it seems that it will involve speech in a language that no one understands, whether that be a human language or not”; Grudem, 1994, 1072.

was the case in Acts 2. When the Holy Spirit fell upon the disciples in 2:3, the result was that all of them (not just the Apostles) began to speak in tongues. Some of the tongues-speech was heard by the many in Jerusalem (2:5) and interpreted their message in their own languages to be the mighty works of God (2:6). In this instance, tongues was given to bridge a real, human language barrier so that the gospel could be heard and repentance and faith could result (2:41). For the purposes of our study, the missiological power of this gift is obvious. If the church is really sent to preach the gospel to all nations (πάντων τοῖς ἔθνεσιν).<sup>17</sup>

A second use for the gift of tongues appears to be the building up of the “inner man.” In 1 Cor. 14:15, Paul describes praying with his spirit and with his mind. This allows us to understand that, for Paul, there is also a category of speaking in tongues which was purely personal. The result would have been an enhanced ability to pray and worship God in a way that resulted in the edification of the individual. Paul seems to think that it was important enough to add that he prayed in tongues more than anyone in the entire Corinthian church! (1 Cor. 14:18). What could have possibly been the missionary power given by this gift? Or put another way, how does this charism enhance mission, as I suggest it should? Quite simply by enhancing the missionary. Building the faith and holiness of the church has direct implications on the church’s missionary effectiveness.

A third and final use for the gift of tongues is a prophetic one. This is the use of tongues and interpretation which Paul mentions in 1 Cor. 14:15. In this case, the function of the gift of tongues is to bring to mind some message for the edification of the church, which Paul seems to

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<sup>17</sup> See Matthew 24:14, *cf.* Mark 13:10.

think is as valuable as prophecy.<sup>18</sup> Since they are similar in their value, therefore, attention shall now turn toward that gift.

### Prophecy

The gift of New Testament prophecy was most notably explained in Wayne Grudem's doctoral dissertation at Cambridge University.<sup>19</sup> He defines the New Testament gift of prophecy as telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind.<sup>20</sup> He argues his case along four lines: (1) Old Testament prophets are roughly equivalent to New Testament Apostles, (2) The word "prophet" had a different meaning in times of the NT which was notably different than prior eras,<sup>21</sup> (3) NT prophets in Acts did *not* speak with the same authority as Scripture, therefore (4) NT prophecy should be spoken of and practiced in submission to biblical revelation, not in addition to or on par with it.<sup>22</sup>

Since the publication of Grudem's work, many interlocutors have come to either challenge or affirm his work.<sup>23</sup> However, no other work has yet dislodged his as the most

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<sup>18</sup> Grudem, 1076.

<sup>19</sup> That dissertation has been published as a book, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*. (Crossway, 2007). It is probably the most important and influential writing on the topic in recent decades.

<sup>20</sup> Grudem, 1049.

<sup>21</sup> By this he means that in NT times, this word was not used to simply talk about someone like Jeremiah or Isaiah who was speaking, "thus saith the Lord," as it were. He notes the word's application to good teachers, leaders, and philosophers. This expanded definition allows for the possibility of the NT understanding its version of a prophet differently than the OT.

<sup>22</sup> Grudem, 1049-1060.

<sup>23</sup> For instance, many from The Master's Seminary (closely associated with John MacArthur) have published challenges to Grudem's exegesis. See: Robert Thomas, "Prophecy Rediscovered? A Review of *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*" *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Jan 1, 1992. Others have embraced and expanded his work. See: David S. Dockery, review of *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, by Wayne Grudem, *Review and Expositor*, 86 (1989): 623-624.



complete study of prophecy in the NT, so it seems safe to utilize many of his categories, noting that for some<sup>24</sup> his work is still controversial. Be that as it may, it is without controversy that the NT gift of prophecy is a revelatory gift—a way for God to communicate or bring to mind something of importance to his people. Paul tells us that prophecy was a desirable gift in the NT church (1 Cor 14:1), and that it is an even greater gift than tongues (1 Cor 14:5). In Paul’s day it played such an important role in the Corinthian church that he both expected normal believers to operate in this gift and he gave instructions for its use in the church (1 Cor 14:24-39). Luke describes this gift as being present in the NT church (Acts 2:17-18), that it often accompanied the laying on of hands (Acts 19:6), and even introduces a character into the story of Acts who was himself an NT prophet, Agabus (Acts 21:10). It seems hard to imagine, therefore, that either Paul or Luke would find this gift’s operation an important part of the mission of the church a matter of controversy. It is sufficient to support my thesis to simply note that prophecy existed in the NT, and it flourished in the church as it grew into the world.

### Healing

Practically every biblical scholar agrees that Jesus was a faith healer.<sup>25</sup> It should hardly come as a surprise that healing was a charism that the Spirit gave to those who would follow

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<sup>24</sup> Particularly dispensationalists, the traditional Reformed, Lutherans, and even some charismatics.

<sup>25</sup> “Thus, from the standpoint of the gospels, the mighty deeds of Jesus, healings and exorcisms alike, were the product of the power which flowed through him as a holy man. . . .”; Marcus Borg, *Jesus: A New Vision*. (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 76.

“A powerful healer of the physically and mentally sick, . . . he was . . . unconditionally given over to the rescue, not of communities, but of persons in need”; Geza Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew*, (Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 206.

“[Jesus’s] healings and exorcisms were an intrinsic part of his proclamation of the kingdom (or rule) of God. The mighty deeds and the proclamation must go together; neither can be understood without the other”; Craig Evans, *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospel*, (InterVarsity Press, 2008), 141.

after him. Indeed, healing is still an integral part of the church today<sup>26</sup>, and always has been. The charisma of healing may be defined as an instantaneous, permanent cure to a disease, ailment, or even death.<sup>27</sup> The pattern for healing was set by Jesus during his earthly ministry. It is interesting to note that for Jesus, healing a person was never an end, but rather a means to testify to gospel and to advance Jesus' mission. Note below the results of Jesus' healing work as recorded in the gospels.

Jesus' Miracle	Scripture Reference	Result Noted by Author
Healing the Nobleman's Son	John 4:50	"And he himself believed, and all his household." (John 4:51)
Healing the Man with the Unclean Spirit	Mark 1:25; Luke 4:35	"And they were all amazed. . . . And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee." (Mark 1:27-28)  "And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region." (Luke 4:37)
Healing Peter's Mother-in-Law	Matt. 8:15; Mark 1:31; Luke 4:39	"This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: 'He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.'" (Matt. 8:17)
Healing a Leper	Matt. 8:3; Mark 1:31	"he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news. . . ." (Mark 1:45)
Healing a Paralytic	Matt. 9:2; Mark 2:5; Luke 5:20	"When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men." (Matt 9:8)
Healing a Man with a Withered Hand	Matt. 12:13; Mark 3:5 Luke 6:10	"But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus." Luke 6:11

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<sup>26</sup> Craig Keener's book, *Miracles*, takes painstaking and careful account of modern reports of healing in the church. I will return to this topic more when I discuss the modern uses of the *charismata*. See also, Craig Keener, *Miracles*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> Wood and Marshall, 453.

Jesus' Miracle	Scripture Reference	Result Noted by Author
Healing the Centurion's Servant	Matt. 8:13; Luke 7:10	This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases." (Matt. 8:17)
Raising a widow's son	Luke 7:14	"Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country." (Luke 7:16-17)
Healing the Gadarene Demoniac	Matt. 8:32; Mark 5:8; Luke 8:33	"And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled." (Mark 5:20)
Healing a Woman with Internal Bleeding	Matt. 9:22; Mark 5:29; Luke 8:44	"his fame through all that district. . . ." (Matt. 9:31)
Raising Jairus' Daughter	Matt. 9:25; Mark 5:41; Luke 8:54	"And the report of this went through all that district." (Matt. 9:26)
Healing Two Blind Men	Matt. 9:29	"But they went away and spread his fame through all that district." (Matt 9:31)
Healing a Mute Man	Matt. 9:33	"And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." (Matt 9:35-36)
Healing a Paralyzed Man	John 5:8	"The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him." (John 5:15)
Healing a Demoniac Girl	Matt. 15:28; Mark 7:29	"And they glorified the God of Israel." (Matt 15:31)
Healing a Deaf, Mute Man	Mark 7:34-35	"And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond measure. . . ." (Mark 7:36-37)

Jesus' Miracle	Scripture Reference	Result Noted by Author
Healing a Blind Man at Bethsaida	Mark 8:25	"Peter answered him, 'You are the Christ.'" (Mark 8:29)
Healing a Blind Man	John 9:7	"He answered, 'Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.'" (John 9:25)
Healing a Demon-Possessed Boy	Matt. 17:18; Mark 9:25; Luke 9:42	"And all were astonished at the majesty of God." (Luke 9:43)
Healing a Blind and Mute Demoniac	Matt. 12:22; Luke 11:14	"And all the people were amazed, and said, 'Can this be the Son of David?'" (Matt 12:23)
Healing a Woman with an 18-year Ailment	Luke 13:10-17	"As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame, and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him." (Luke 13:17)
Healing a Man on the Sabbath	Luke 14:4	"And they could not reply to these things." (Luke 14:4)
Healing 10 Lepers	Luke 17:11-19	"'Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?' And he said to him, 'Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.'" (Luke 17:18-19)
Raising Lazarus	John 11:43-44	"Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him. . . ." (Luke 11:45)
Healing a Blind Man at Jericho	Luke 18:42	"and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God." (Luke 18:43)
Healing Blind Bartimaeus	Mark 10:46	"And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way." (Luke 10:52)
Restoring a Severed Ear	Matt. 26:51; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:50-51; John 18:10	"Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?" (John 18:11)

Far from a pedantic exercise in biblical curiosity, the observations of the chart above should prove as a helpful corrective to both the hyper-charismatic who makes a show of healing and demonstrations of power *and* for the cessationist who acts as if healing power was

never to be expected for Jesus' followers. It seems clear that, for Jesus, the acts of healing were exactly what John's gospel most notably calls them—signs. They pointed to a reality beyond themselves, to the truthfulness of the gospel.

Concluding, while the Scriptures themselves don't limit discussion of the *charismata* to the "supernatural" realm to which Western Christians are comfortable relegating them, we have borrowed this category briefly to focus our study. Tongues, healing, and prophecy were all gifts given to New Testament believers, and each one of these gifts carried with it a power for witness. In order to further support this thesis, we shall now turn our attention to the book of Acts and the time immediately following—the earliest point of the church's extra-biblical history.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE *CHARISMATA* IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE AND IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Having seen that Scriptures clearly teach that the Spirit is given to God's people to empower them to bear witness to God's message, it is no surprise that that's exactly the way the book of Acts plays out. In this chapter we shall look at the earliest historical data we have to verify our narrative and theological conclusions from the previous one. The *charismata* were, as we shall see, a normative part of the experience of the church and a critical part of its strategy for expansion.

Until the early apologists (around 135 AD) source material for the practices of the church are scarce. For this part of our study we will draw on the book of *Acts*, the *Didache*, and the few extant sources of this period related to the topic of church practice (like *The Shepherd of Hermas*, *First Clement*, the writings of Ignatius of Antioch, etc.). First we shall turn to the Apostolic period, which is most clearly described in the book of *Acts*.

#### Acts & The Apostolic Age

*Acts* describes the church's journey from birth to flourishing in the hostile soil of the Roman world. Luke, the recorder of Acts, faithfully included the abundance of supernatural phenomena that characterized the life and ministry of the early church.<sup>1</sup> The miracles in *Acts* are

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<sup>1</sup> Eddie L Hyatt, *2000 Years Of Charismatic Christianity: A 21st Century Look at Church History from a Pentecostal/Charismatic Perspective* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2002), 9.

numerous and have received no small amount of scholarly attention. Still more interesting seems to be the way that Luke parallels the miracles of Paul and Peter in his writing.<sup>2</sup> To begin, note the miracles in Acts ascribed to both, their close parallelisms, and their results:

Miracle Associated with Peter	Result	Miracle Associated with Paul	Result
Many signs and wonders were done by the Apostles, with Peter, among the Jews in Jerusalem (2:43)	The gospel was preached and many believed (2:47).	Many signs and wonders were done by Paul and Barnabas among the Gentiles in Asia Minor (14:3).	The gospel was preached and controversy arose (14:7).
Peter, in the company of John at the temple gate, heals the man lame from his mother's womb (3:1 sq.)	Praise, and all were filled with wonder, and the gospel was preached (3:10-16).	Paul, in the company of Barnabas at Lystra, heals the man lame from his birth (14:7 sq.)	The gospel was preached and many disciples were made (14:21).
Peter rebukes Ananias and Saphira, who are struck dead for tempting the Spirit of the Lord (5:1 sq.)	Fear came upon the church, more believers were added (5:11, 14).	Paul rebukes the sorcerer Elymas, who is suddenly blinded for making crooked the straight ways of the Lord (13:8 sq.)	The proconsul believed the gospel (13:12).
The building in Jerusalem is shaken, where Peter and the disciples were praying for strength from God (4:31)	Generosity, grace, and growth resulted (4:32-37).	The prison building at Philippi is shaken, where Paul and Silas were praying and singing the praises of God (16:25 sq.)	The jailer and his whole household believe (16:31).
Peter is so filled with the power of God that even his shadow is enough to heal the sick on whom it falls (5:15)	More believers were added (5:14).	Paul is so effective in working miracles that even handkerchiefs and aprons were carried from his body to the sick and the diseases left them (19:12)	People repented and the word of the Lord increased (19:20).
At Lydda, Peter suddenly heals the paralytic Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years (9:33 sq.)	The residents of Lydda and Sharon returned to the Lord (9:35).	On Malta, Paul suddenly cures the father of his host, Publius, of fever and dysentery (28:7 sq.)	Provision for the mission of God was given (28:9-10).
At Joppa, Peter restores to life the woman Tabitha, who had been devoted to works of charity (9:36 sq.)	Many believed (9:42).	At Troas, Paul restores to life the young man Eutychus, who fell down from the third story (20:9 sq.)	The disciples were comforted and the church meeting continued (20:10-11).

<sup>2</sup> John Hardon, "The Miracle Narratives in the Acts of the Apostles," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 16 (1996): 303-18.

Miracle Associated with Peter	Result	Miracle Associated with Paul	Result
Peter's chains are removed, and he is delivered from prison in Jerusalem by means of an angel (12:5 sq.)	Peter was free to preach the gospel (12:19).	Paul's chains are suddenly loosed in the prison at Philippi (16:25 sq.)	The jailer is converted (16:30).

Many have sought to explain why Luke would apparently so intentionally parallel the miracles of Peter and Paul, but what if another theory was offered—namely that Luke intended to show that the Apostle to the Jews (Peter) and the Apostle to the Gentiles (Paul) both shared the strategy and the same power? What if, with overwhelming evidence, Luke desired his readers to understand that the *charismata* were given to the Apostles as a key part of the missionary strategy of the early church? The results are certainly remarkable enough to prove the validity of this strategy. Eighteenth century historian Edward Gibbon noted:

The primitive Christians perpetually trod on mystic ground, and their minds were exercised by the habits of believing the most extraordinary event. . . . The real or imaginary prodigies of which they so frequently conceived themselves to be the objects, the instruments or the spectators, very happily disposed them to adopt with the same ease, but with far greater justice, the authentic wonders of the evangelical history; and thus miracles that exceeded not the measure of their own experience inspired them with the most lively assurance of mysteries which were acknowledged to surpass the limits of their understanding.<sup>3</sup>

It seems obvious, then, that a primary part of the strategy of the Apostolic church was the demonstration of power. As Hardon concludes, “Even this brief summary of divine interventions and correlative conversions will confirm Gibbon’s grudging admission . . . that except for the apostolic miracles, Christianity would not have been so rapidly and firmly established throughout the ancient world.”<sup>4</sup> The *charismata* were critical to the life and expansion of the Church in the

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<sup>3</sup> Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, (New York: Collier, 1900), I, 523, 555.

<sup>4</sup> Gibbon, 555.



Apostolic age, and as we shall soon see, that remained the case in the period of time immediately following.

### The Wandering Prophet

The period of time immediately following the death of the Apostles was one of great expansion. The providence of God had birthed the church in the Roman empire, ready-made for missionary expansion with its heretofore historically unparalleled infrastructure for the rapid movement of people, goods, and ideas.<sup>5</sup> Also contributing were its common language and culture<sup>6</sup> which allowed for the nuances of the gospel to be expressed and understood. But the infrastructure for growth was only part of the formula which led to the church's explosive growth. That infrastructure needed an agent. Dr. Ed Stetzer notes:

“Gifts” from the Jews, Romans, Greeks, and pagans would help the gospel grow from a small sect in Palestine to the state religion in 300 years. The unique combination of these factors prepared the Empire for a new faith. Though the empire was replete with conflicting truth claims, the faith of the Christians rapidly gained ground. . . . In addition to the power of the Holy Spirit, a delivery system and agent were necessary. The ecstatic wandering prophet may have been the primary missionary strategy of the early church.<sup>7</sup>

Stetzer continues on to lay out his argument for this thesis, which we shall trace briefly here. Concerned particularly with the time period between 70-135 A.D. Since the destruction of the Temple left the early Christians without their central, Jewish point of reference, the post-Apostolic age is generally believed to have begun at that time.<sup>8</sup> He believed that 135 A.D. marks the beginning of a different kind of strategy when the first apologists take their place in the history of the church, and therefore is curious to know what accounts for the rapid growth of the

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<sup>5</sup> James P. Eckman, *Exploring Church History*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 9.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 17.

<sup>7</sup> Ed Stetzer, “The Wandering Ecstatic Prophet in the Mission Strategy of the Early Church,” *Journal of Evangelism and Missions* 1 (2003): 1.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

church in this “hole” in the timeline, wherein precious little historical data has been brought together. His answer to this question is in the rise of the “wandering, ecstatic prophet.” His argument follows a few lines of evidence.

First, he notes that two kinds of ministry emerged at this time, the Apostles and teachers who taught the tradition of the church and the interpretation of Scripture, and the prophets who spoke from revelations they received directly from God.<sup>9</sup> During this stage of church life, the wandering prophet and the residential bishop/elder were not held in equal regard. Rather, the residential minister was held in lower status.<sup>10</sup> In the early church, men with these supernatural charisms were sent from church to church, and this seems to have been a key part of the missionary strategy of the early church.<sup>11</sup> The discovery of the *Didache* has lent a good deal of credibility to this account, since its pages are filled with instructions for the church’s interactions with wandering prophets. More than simply proving that the *charismata* flourished in this period, Stetzer argues that this goes to prove that these ecstatic missionaries acted as a major force in the mission and strategy of the early church. They would wander around presenting the gospel in word and with demonstrations of power, relying on Christian communities to provide for their needs, yet only staying a short time so the mission could continue.<sup>12</sup>

His second line of reasoning comes from the *Didache* itself. The *Didache* is a critically important book, and Stetzer is concerned to make sure we know that. He writes:

The importance of the *Didache* on the early church should not be understated. Clement of Alexandria understood the *Didache* to be scripture (Miscellanies 1.20). Eusebius

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<sup>9</sup> Jerome Crowe, *From Jerusalem to Antioch: The Gospel Across Cultures*, (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 59.

<sup>10</sup> Stetzer, 14.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>12</sup> Green, 169-170.

placed it among the *νοθή*, or spurious books that were valuable but not canonical. . . . The *Didache* was on the verge of inclusion in the canon until the fourth century. . . . It serves as an instruction book in the mission strategy and practice of early wandering prophets. The *Didache* doesn't just mention prophets, it describes them in high esteem. . . . Two times in the *Didache*, apostles and prophets are equated. . . . At the time of the apostles, the apostles were clearly in charge. By the time of the *Didache* (at least in Syria/Palestine) the prophet was the chief figure of church.<sup>13</sup>

Stetzer's perspective seems to hold up under scrutiny of the *Didache* itself. While the book takes note of early church government through deacons and elders, it also seems to hold the status of the wandering prophet in high regard. "Elect, therefore, for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and not covetous, and true and approved, for they perform for you the service of prophets and teachers." (Did. 15:1-2) "And ye shall not attempt or dispute with any prophet who speaketh in the spirit; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven." (Did. 11:7) The office of the prophet was important enough at this time for the *Didache* to be concerned uniquely with giving the churches the ability not only to know how to treat one, but how to tell a true prophet from a false prophet.

Stetzer's third line of reasoning comes from noting what happened after about two centuries. He notes that the Montanist controversy accelerated the decline of the practice of the *charismata* in the church at-large by the beginning of the third century.<sup>14</sup> Yet, along with this minimization of the *charismata* he also notes a slowing down of the missionary expansion of the church. He notes, "The third century produced ethic far different than that found in the late first and early second centuries. No longer are missionaries mentioned. The growth was no longer dramatic (until perhaps 260CE). Instead, Christianity quietly advanced from where this initial

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<sup>13</sup> Stetzer, 22-23.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 25.

burst had brought it. It solidified and institutionalized, soon becoming the state religion.”<sup>15</sup>

Summarizing his position, one could say that Stetzer thinks that the degree to which the early church relegated the supernatural to the back seat of missions is the degree to which missions slowed. He concludes by saying, “The decline of prophecy and ecstatic phenomena cost the church. By marginalizing prophecy and ecstatic phenomena and emphasizing the monarchical episcopate, the church lost much of its zeal (and half its missionaries, since both men and women were prophets).”<sup>16</sup>

This section of our study has demonstrated that for the earliest Christians, both during and immediately after the life of the Apostles, the *charismata* weren’t simply a side-show to the preaching of the gospel. They were the very demonstrations of power which lent veracity and zeal to the message of the gospel. Not only that, but the very same demonstrations fanned to flame the missionary zeal of the church—a zeal which was extinguished somewhat once the ecstatic gifts lost their prominence, and those who practiced them lost their place in the family of the early church.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>16</sup> Stetzer, 28.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE *CHARISMATA* IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Hans von Campenhausen described the early church as a community of “free fellowship, developing through the living interplay of the spiritual gifts and ministries, without the benefit of official authority or responsible elders.”<sup>1</sup> Ronald Kydd notes that “[All the leaders] were expected to minister charismatically. . . .”<sup>2</sup> The way the early church approached the *charismata* and their usage changed as time progressed. Politics, heresies, and pressure to organize the growing church gradually led the episcopate to capture and manage the use of the ecstatic gifts until they were no longer seen or practiced among the laity, and came wholly under the control of the bishop.<sup>3</sup> Despite their eventual relegation for a period, the *charismata* were not always so practiced. In fact, a survey of the source material from the earliest leaders of the Christian church will show that while the role of *charismata* was altered structurally within the church, they did not cease to be what they had always been—a critical part of the missionary strategy of the church.

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<sup>1</sup> Hans Von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Churches of the First Three Centuries*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 1969), 58.

<sup>2</sup> Ronald A. N. Kydd, *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984), 10.

<sup>3</sup> James L. Ash, “The Decline of Ecstatic Prophecy in the Early Church,” *Theological Studies* 36 (1976): 250.

## The Apostolic Fathers

If the thesis of this paper is true then it stands to reason that we should expect the earliest of the church fathers to speak of the *charisms* at work in their own churches. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there is good evidence to suggest that coming into the time of the Apostolic Fathers, a primary mission strategy was the use of the itinerant prophet. Readers of the *Didache* were admonished to receive these prophets as from the Lord (Did. 11:1). In the West, Clement of Rome appears to have had an understanding that the Spirit empowers the people of God for gospel proclamation (1 Clement 42:3)—a view consistent with the *Didache*. Kydd summarizes Clement's views of the function of the *charismata* in this way:

Clement's work . . . reveals his thinking rather clearly. They show each Christian what he should do to put himself at the disposal of others. The gifts find their meaning in ministry . . . Paul has precisely the same focus . . . There is no doubt in Paul's mind that the thrust of spiritual ministry is outward toward others. These similarities between Paul's thinking and Clement's thinking are significant.<sup>4</sup>

Clement's contemporary, Ignatius of Antioch, was also a leader full of spiritual power.<sup>5</sup> He earnestly desired the all the *charismata*, even writing to Polycarp that he might pray for him to "be deficient in nothing" that he may "abound in all gifts."<sup>6</sup> In reference to 1 Corinthians 1:7, he sanctions the spiritual gifts in speaking of the church as having "obtained mercy in every *charisma*, and is filled with faith and love, and is not lacking in any *charisma*, most becoming of God and possessing holiness."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Kydd, 12.

<sup>5</sup> Stanley Burgess, *The Holy Spirit: Ancient Christian Traditions* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984), 19.

<sup>6</sup> Ignatius, *Epistle to Polycarp*, in, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1: The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus*, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, (Edinburgh: T&T, 1886), 2.

<sup>7</sup> Ignatius, *Epistle to the Smyrnaens*, in, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1: The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus*, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, (Edinburgh: T&T, 1886), 9.

Now, this may seem like precious little data. However, there are few reasons that the writings of the Apostolic Fathers seem scant on many mentions of the *charismata*. First, there are good reasons to believe that the *charismata* were such a normative part of church life that to mention them was superfluous.<sup>8</sup> After all, Paul hardly mentioned the eucharist except to correct a problem in the Corinthian church. It would obviously be silly to conclude from that fact that communion was never taken. Second, we must remember that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Silence about the *charismata* cannot be taken as an argument that the gifts were lacking, because we cannot expect a teacher to give their entire theology in a letter (i.e., 1 Corinthians). And as we shall presently see, the next Apostolic Father had a good deal to say about the apologetic significance of the *charismata*.

Justin Martyr was not only an Apostolic Father, but he was the church's first apologist to argue for the validity of the Christian faith using the categories of Greek thought. In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin makes it clear that he sees the *charismata* at work in his church, saying, "God imparts *charismata* from the grace of His Spirit's power to those who believe in Him according as He deems each man worthy thereof. I have already said, and do again say, that it had been prophesied that this would be done by Him after His ascension to heaven. . . . Now it is possible to see among us women and men who possess gifts of the Spirit of God."<sup>9</sup> He goes on to explain that he has also witnessed exorcisms and healing in Jesus' name, and that *charisms* such as these

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<sup>8</sup> Eusebius Stephanou, "The Charismata in the Early Church Fathers." *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 21, (1976): 129.

<sup>9</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, in, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, vol. 1, (Edinburgh: T&T, 1886), 6.1.

are happening “throughout the whole world.”<sup>10</sup> He seems to be, as Dr. Sam Storms puts it, “especially clear”<sup>11</sup> on the matter of the *charismata*. To quote Justin at length, he writes:

For the prophetic gifts remain with us, even to the present time. And hence you ought to understand that [the gifts] formerly among your nation have been transferred to us. And just as there were false prophets contemporaneous with your holy prophets, so are there now many false teachers amongst us, of whom our Lord forewarned us to beware; so that in no respect are we deficient, since we know that He foreknew all that would happen to us after His resurrection from the dead and ascension to heaven.<sup>12</sup>

Most nascent to the present thesis is how Justin’s descriptions of the *charismata* were all employed in his apologetic. That is, Justin thought that the gifts of the Spirit were not interesting, helping gifts given to the church, merely. He was quite willing to employ them in the defense of the faith and the advancement of the gospel. Kydd picks up on Justin’s strategic view of the gifts, noting that giving them was part of God’s strategy for dealing with unbelievers.<sup>13</sup> For him the exercise of evangelism and apologetics was not somehow a different enterprise than the Spirit-filled life of power—they were fused, one giving evidence of the other. In fact, Justin believed that the only evidence of the church’s holiness was the fact that in it dwelt the Person of the Holy Spirit.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> “And now you can learn this from what is under your own observation. For numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world, and in your city, many of our Christian men exorcising them in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, have healed and do heal, rendering helpless and driving the possessing devils out of the men, though they could not be cured by all the other exorcists, and those who used incantations and drugs”; Justin Martyr, *Second Apology*, in, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1: The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus*, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, (Edinburgh: T&T, 1886), 11.

<sup>11</sup> Sam Storms, “Spiritual Gifts in the Early Church, Part 2,” *Enjoying God Ministries*, May 21, 2013, available from <http://samstorms.com/enjoying-god-blog/post/spiritual-gifts-in-church-history--2->; Internet; accessed 19 October 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, in, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1: The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus*, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, (Edinburgh: T&T, 1886), 82.1.

<sup>13</sup> Kydd, 27.

<sup>14</sup> Burgess, 29.



It is important at this point to see that as the church's mission was challenged by the host culture into which it was sent, the usefulness of the *charismata* was adapted. The mission of the Apostles involved the practice of sign-gifts as a direct testimony to the truthfulness of their claims about Jesus. As the work of the Fathers became more apologetic, the inverse became true. Now the *charismata* would be employed to refute false teaching as well.

### The Polemicists And Apologists

Irenaeus (130-202 A.D.) bishop of Lyon was a disciple of Polycarp. There is strong evidence to suggest that he supported the present-day activity of the Holy Spirit and the importance of the *charismata* in the life of the believer. Much of his life and ministry was concerned with the defense of the church against the legion of false beliefs propounded by the Gnosticism of the day. What is fascinating about his apologetic and his polemic against this Gnosticism is that never once does he offer up the idea that the *charismata* have ceased.<sup>15</sup> Rather, he goes after the Gnostics on the grounds that their practice of the *charismata* was wrongly ordered and producing bad fruit. He doesn't say, "things like this do not happen," like one might hear today. Instead, he excoriates the heretics for employing their version of the *charismata* wrongly. One such heretic was a Gnostic teacher named Marcus. Of him, Irenaeus writes:

There is another among these heretics, Marcus by name, who boasts himself as having improved upon his master. He is a perfect adept in magical impostures, and by this means drawing away a great number of men, and not a few women. . . . It appears probably enough that this man possesses a demon as his familiar spirit, by means of whom he seems to prophesy, and also enables as many as he counts worthy to be partakers of his Charis themselves. . . . He devotes himself especially to women, and those such as are well-bred, elegantly attired, and of great wealth.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Stephanou, 131.

<sup>16</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, In, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1: The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus*, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, (Edinburgh: T&T, 1886), 1.8.1.

Yet, Irenaeus is unwilling to throw the baby of the *charismata* out with the bathwater of false teaching. He says:

For some drive out demons with certainty and truth, so that often those who have themselves been cleansed from the evil spirits believe and are in the church, and some have foreknowledge of things to be, and visions and prophetic speech, and other cure the sick by the laying on of hands and make them whole, and even as we have said, the dead have been raised and remained with us for many years. And why should I say more? It is not possible to tell the number of gifts which the church through out the whole world, having received them from God in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, uses each day for the benefit of the heathen, deceiving none and making profit from none. For as it received freely from God, it ministers also freely.<sup>17</sup>

And:

In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the church who *possess prophetic gifts*, and who through the Spirit *speak all kinds of languages*, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men and declare the mysteries of God.<sup>18</sup>

Wherefore, also, those who are in truth His disciples, receiving grace from Him, do *in His name perform miracles*, so as to promote the welfare of other men, according to the gift which each one has received from Him. For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe in Christ and join themselves to the church. *Others still heal the sick* by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, *the dead even have been raised up*, and remained among us for many years.<sup>19</sup> (Emphasis mine)

The writings of Irenaeus serve as a powerful eyewitness testimony to the powerful *charismata* which were at work in the church of his day. Kydd summarizes:

This is an eyewitness testimony to the fact that the gifts of the spirit were active in the Church. . . . Irenaeus goes on record, saying that the Church he knows is charismatic. He actually refers to people whom he has heard ministering through prophecy, etc. He seems to be going out of his way to demonstrate that the miraculous power of God had not departed from the Church.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 32.3.

<sup>18</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 2.32.

<sup>19</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 5.36.

<sup>20</sup> Kydd, 45.

While the evidence suggests that Irenaeus was a supporter of the *charismata*, Burgess notes that his writings may have led to the dismissal of the gifts in the generations that followed him. He desired prophecy, but within order, so he worked hard to make the final authority in the church no longer the ecstatic prophet but the monarchical bishop. Now, *charismata* and order would exist in tension.<sup>21</sup> Even so, we cannot glide past the way Irenaeus employed the power of the Holy Spirit—as a direct evidence of the truthfulness of the historic gospel, the validity of the Church, and the refutation of heretics. Far from expecting the *charismata* to cease, he relied on them as a leg in the stool of this apologetic.<sup>22</sup>

Tertullian (c. 160-240 A.D.) was the church's first pentecostal theologian.<sup>23</sup> His work gave the church the concepts of the persons of the Trinity, and the very word *Trinity* itself.<sup>24</sup> He wrote of his experience in the Montanist movement—a schismatic group which reacted to the growing episcopate and sought to return to the ecstatic, supernaturalist beginnings of the church—that they often experienced the *charismata*.<sup>25</sup> Of his Montanist church he writes, “For, seeing

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<sup>21</sup> Burgess, 62.

<sup>22</sup> Hyatt, 16.

<sup>23</sup> Burgess, 63.

<sup>24</sup> Tertullian, *Ad Autolycum*, in, *The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325: Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3, ed. by A. Cleveland Coxe, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1885), 2:15.

<sup>25</sup> Tertullian's involvement with Montanism has been concluded to be at best controversial. Some modern Pentecostals, in seeking to justify their position, over-sell the good of this group. Hyatt, for example, writes glowingly of Tertullian's report of Maximilla, “He goes on to tell of a woman in his congregation "whose lot it has been to be favored with sundry gifts of revelation." According to Tertullian, she often experienced visitations from angels and from the Lord Himself. In addition, she often knew the secrets of people's hearts and was able to give answers to some of their deepest needs, including physical healing. Tertullian says, "All her communications are examined with the most scrupulous care in order that their truth may be probed"; Hyatt, 17. While I think this is probably too sympathetic a position, roundly rejecting the Montanists (as is the want of many modern-day cessationists) is also prejudicial. It stands as a small historical wonder that someone with the skillful, erudite mind of Tertullian was part of this movement. That fact alone disallows straight-up rejection of Montanism. Yet, the controversy remains. It's probably best for us to feel the tension and let it remain.

that we acknowledge spiritual *charismata*, or gifts, we too have merited the attainment of the prophetic gift.”<sup>26</sup> As a member of the Montanist movement and an advocate of the *charismata*, Tertullian seemed to have no problem with the ecstatic gifts. In fact, he used them in his defense of the faith.

Most his work was derived from the missionary necessities of his day. One of his greatest tasks was to defend the faith against the heretic Marcion, who developed a di-theism in response to the tension between the Old and New Testaments which he found irresolvable. His thesis was rejected by the orthodox church, and Tertullian became the chief apologist defending the truth of the faith from the growing Marcionite movement. Tertullian was deeply disturbed by Marcion’s rejecting of the third Person of the Trinity, and demanded that Marcion explain the New Testament’s emphasis on the ministry of the Holy Spirit without reference to Him and his gifts.<sup>27</sup> Writing against the Marcionite heresy he directly challenges his opponents to produce the same gifts of power that he saw regularly in his church:

Let Marcion then exhibit, as gifts of his god, some prophets, such as have not spoken by human sense, but with the Spirit of God, such as have both predicted things to come, and have made manifest the secrets of the heart; let him produce a psalm, a vision, a prayer—only let it be by the Spirit, in an ecstasy, that is, in a rapture, whenever an interpretation of tongues has occurred to him; let him show to me also, that any woman of boastful tongue in his community has ever prophesied from amongst those specially holy sisters of his. Now all these signs (of spiritual gifts) are forthcoming on my side without any difficulty, and they agree, too, with the rules, and the dispensations, and the instruction of the Creator.<sup>28</sup>

Such a defense of the faith is remarkable, and notably absent in any modern academic dissertation! I can hardly imagine finding a similar apologetic for the Christian faith at a modern

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<sup>26</sup> Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul*, in, *The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325: Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3, ed. by A. Cleveland Coxe, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1885), 9.

<sup>27</sup> Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, in, *The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325: Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3, ed. by A. Cleveland Coxe, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1885), 5.8.

<sup>28</sup> Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, 5.8.

university or in an academic journal. Yet, that was precisely the way Tertullian defending the faith against the most threatening heretical sect in his day.

Clement of Alexandria (150 A.D-216 A.D.) was another polemicist of the time, contemporary with Tertullian, who seems to take for granted the *charisms* of the Holy Spirit in the church. Recognizing that false prophecy has led some astray, he encourages his readers to “adduce the voice of prophecy accordant with the truth.”<sup>29</sup> Quoting from 1 Corinthians 12, Clement seems to assume that his readers are experiencing the *charismata* and they are not at all controversial.<sup>30</sup> Taking a similar approach, Origen (185-254 A.D.) also assumed the activity of the *charismata*, and noted how they were especially useful as a validating force for the truthfulness of the gospel. He writes:

We have to say, moreover, that the Gospel has a demonstration of its own. . . . And this diviner method is called by the Apostle the “manifestation of the Spirit and of power.” Of the Spirit, on account of the prophecies, which are sufficient to produce faith in anyone who reads them, especially in those things which relate to Christ; and of power, because of the signs and wonders which we must believe to have been performed . . . and on this, that traces of them are still preserved among those who regulate their lives by the precepts of the gospel.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Heathen*, in, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, vol. 2. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1886), 1.

<sup>30</sup> “And now we perceive where, and how, and when the divine apostle mentions the perfect man, and how he shows the differences of the perfect. And again, on the other hand: ‘The manifestation of the Spirit is given for our profit. For to one is given the word of wisdom by the Spirit; to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith through the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing through the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another diversities of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: and all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, distributing to each one according as He wills.’ Such being the case, the prophets are perfect in prophecy, the righteous in righteousness, and the martyrs in confession, and others in preaching, not that they are not sharers in the common virtues, but are proficient in those to which they are appointed”; Clement, *The Stromata*, in, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, vol. 2. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1886), 4.21.

<sup>31</sup> Origen, *Against Celsus*, in, *The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325: Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, ed. by A. Cleveland Coxe, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1885), 1.2.

It seems that Origen, deep in controversy with Celsus, was doing in his time and situation something similar to what Tertullian did with Marcion—building his apologetic against heresy not merely on more sound doctrine, but on the power of the Spirit in his day. Certainly this early post-Apostolic period of the church was one in which the gifts of the Spirit were seen, common, and described by each of the leading patriarchs as having a place in the life and ministry of the church to the world in which it was sent.

### THE POST-NICENE FATHERS

The end of the state-wide persecution of the Church led to a period of peace for the church, and a flurry of theological writing. Eusebius (263-339 A.D.) worked as the Court Theologian for Emperor Constantine. In his *Ecclesiastical History*, he notes the use and practice of the *charismata* with particular positivity. First, he reports the work of Quadratus who was “renowned for his prophetic gifts.”<sup>32</sup> For our purposes, we must note the fruitfulness that Eusebius connects with this charismatic leader. He and other men “built up the foundations of the churches which had been laid by the apostles in every place, and preached the Gospel more and more widely and scattered the saving seeds of the kingdom of heaven far and near throughout the whole world.”<sup>33</sup> He drives his point home saying, “For a great many wonderful works were done through them by the power of the divine Spirit, so that at the first hearing whole multitudes of men eagerly embraced the religion of the Creator of the universe.”<sup>34</sup> In his *Commentary on the Psalms*, he wrote:

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<sup>32</sup> Eusebius, *History of the Church*, in, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. by Philip Schaff, vol. 1, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1886), 3.37.1.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 3.37.3

The flashes of God's lightning appeared in all the world. What else are His lightnings but the radiances of the *charismata* of the Holy Spirit which flash throughout the whole inhabited world. There is a diversity of *charismata*, but the same Spirit. To some is given a word of wisdom by the Spirit and to another word of knowledge and another faith and so on, which, being excellent *charismata* of God, flash and bring radiance to His church.<sup>35</sup>

It should be noted that Eusebius' view of the Montanists was extremely negative. But this was not because of an *a priori* disbelief in the *charismata*. Rather, his negativity was due to a conclusion he drew about the "New Prophecy" as being neither truly from God nor for the Church. In fact, one of Maximilla's prophecies has been noted as a source of early cessationism, and it was vigorously opposed by Eusebius. Maximilla is recorded as saying, "After me there will be no more prophecy, but the end (*sunteleion*)."<sup>36</sup> But Eusebius found this to be very disagreeable, and opposed her proto-cessasionist suggestion by writing, "it is necessary that the prophetic *charisma* be in all the Church until the final coming."<sup>37</sup> His vigorous opposition to Montanism did not keep Eusebius from praising those men who walked in powerful *charisms*, and noting their fruitfulness, describing them as, "holy men of God among men who shared in the most excellent *charismata*, as prophesying future events, healing diseases, raising the dead, and speaking in tongues, and sharing in wisdom and knowledge."<sup>38</sup> The great early church historian clearly noted the power and necessity of the *charismata* for the whole church. Yet in his day, the practices of the *charismata* began to wane.

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<sup>35</sup> Eusebius, *Commentary on Isaiah*. In, *Ancient Christian Texts*, ed. by Thomas C. Oden and Gerald L. Bray, (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 76.16-17.

<sup>36</sup> Epiphanius, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Book I*, trans. Frank Williams, (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2016), 48.5.4.

<sup>37</sup> Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 14.4.

<sup>38</sup> Eusebius. *Commentary on Isaiah*, 6.2.

Yet another major controversy soon erupted in the church in the writings and teachings of Arius. This compelled Athanasius of Alexandria (296-373 A.D.) to rise up and defend the faith against this false teaching, and elevated his importance at the time. Athanasius was very much aware of the *charismata* in his own day, though he thought it was perhaps the purview of the bishops only.<sup>39</sup> He very clearly mentions at least two of the gifts of the Spirit by name, describing the *charismata* as that “which the Spirit divides to each and bestowed from the Father through the Logos. The Spirit is not outside the Logos, but being in the Logos, through Him is in God. And so the spiritual gifts are given in the Trinity.”<sup>40</sup> In fact, he seemed to think that the *charismata* were more than just gifts but gifts which were useful to the ministry and mission of the church.<sup>41</sup> It’s no small wonder, then, that Athanasius does for the divinity of the Son the same for the divinity of the Spirit. For him, any rejection of the divinity of the Son or the Spirit would ruin Christianity, and thus firmly places the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity at the center of Christian theology.<sup>42</sup>

Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386 A.D.) was another, though lesser known, patriarch of the time. His view of the *charismata* was clearly that they were not relics of the past but active in the

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<sup>39</sup> “We know of Bishops who do miracles, and of monks who do not”; Athanasius, *Letter to Dracontius*, in, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. by Philip Schaff, vol. 1-7. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1886), 9.

<sup>40</sup> Athanasius, *Letter to Dracontius*, 3.5.

<sup>41</sup> “In his general epistle to the bishops of Egypt, he admonishes as follows: “Wherefore, it is good and needful for us to pray that we may receive the gift of discerning the spirits, so that everyone may know, according to the precept of John, whom he ought to reject and whom he ought to receive as friends and of the same faith”; Eusebius Stephanou, “The Charismata in the Early Church Fathers.” *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 21 (1976): 137.

<sup>42</sup> Burgess, 120.



church of his day, saying, “Thou receivest now remission of thy sins and the *charismata* of King's spiritual bounty.”<sup>43</sup> Describing the gifts of the Spirit, he says:

For He employs the tongue of one man for wisdom; the soul of another he enlightens by Prophecy, to another he gives power to drive away devils, to another He gives to interpret the divine Scriptures. He strengthens one man's self-command; He teaches another the way to give alms; another He teaches to fast and discipline himself; another He teaches to despise the things of the body; another he trains for martyrdom; diverse in different men, yet not diverse from Himself, as it is written. . . .<sup>44</sup>

For our purposes we should note that Cyril draws a connection between the *charismata* and bearing witness to the message and mission of the gospel in martyrdom. For him, the two were linked. Bearing final witness required a *charism*, and for Cyril these were of the same sort that Paul listed in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14.

Basil the Great (329-379 A.D.) spent much of his tenure as Bishop of Caesarea in conflict. As an adult he found himself attracted to the monastic life, but left seclusion to help his Bishop—an office he would shortly thereafter occupy. In his homily titled *On Faith*, he states, “we believe therefore and confess one only true and good God . . . and one only Spirit, the Paraclete who divideth and worketh and *charismata* that come of God.”<sup>45</sup> This view of the Holy Spirit influence Basil's ecclesiology as well. He understood the church to be a body composed of

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<sup>43</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogic Lectures*, in *St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Lectures on the Christian Sacraments*. In, *The Fathers of the Church: St. Cyril of Jerusalem*, vol. 2, ed. by Bernard M. Peebles, (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1970), 13.23.

<sup>44</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogic Lectures*, 16.12.

<sup>45</sup> Basil the Great, *On Faith*, in, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. by Philip Schaff, vol. 1-7. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1886).

individual members each of whom is assigned a unique *charisma* by the Spirit.<sup>46</sup> He believed that edification of the body and the mission of the church excelled when the members cooperate with one another and participate in their individual *charismata*.<sup>47</sup> He writes, “For He gave, it is said, in the church, first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues, for this order is ordained in accordance with the division of the gifts that are of the Spirit.”<sup>48</sup>

### Augustine of Hippo

Our cursory glance at the early church’s thought and practice of the *charismata* ends by looking at the ministry and teaching of Augustine of Hippo (354 - 430 A.D.) Early in his life and ministry, he expressed a cessationist position.<sup>49</sup> What is lesser-known about Augustine is that,

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<sup>46</sup> “Since the gifts of the Spirit are different, and neither is one able to receive all nor all the same gifts, each should abide with sobriety and gratitude in the gift given him, and all should be harmonious with one another in the love of Christ, as members in a body. So that he who is inferior in gifts should not despair of himself in comparison with him that excels, nor should the greater despise the less. For those who are divided and at variance with one another deserve to perish.” – Basil the Great, *The Morals*, in, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. by Philip Schaff, vol. 1-7. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1886), 60.1.

<sup>47</sup> Basil The Great, *The Longer Rules*, in, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. by Philip Schaff, vol. 1-7. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1886), 7.2.

<sup>48</sup> Basil The Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, in, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. by Philip Schaff, vol. 1-7. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1886), 16.37.

<sup>49</sup> “We have heard that our predecessors, at a stage of faith on the way from temporal things up to eternal things, followed visible miracles. They could do nothing else. And they did so in such a way that it should not be necessary for those who came after them. When the Catholic Church had been founded and diffused throughout the whole world, on the one hand miracles were not allowed to continue till our time, lest the mind should always seek visible things, and the human race should grow cold by becoming accustomed to things which when they were novelties kindled its faith. On the other hand we must not doubt that those are to be believed who proclaimed miracles which only a few had actually seen, and yet were able to persuade whole peoples to follow them. At that time the problem was to get people to believe before anyone was fit to reason about divine and invisible things”; Augustine, *Of True Religion*, Translated by J. H. S. Burleigh, in, *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, ed. by J. H. S. Burleigh, (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1953), 6.248.

while denying certain gifts operative in his day (like tongues)<sup>50</sup> he goes to a length to describe instances of gifts of healing and other miracles in his own ministry.<sup>51</sup> One such example comes from *The City of God*, when he relates the story of Paulus and Palladia, and given Augustine's influence, the story is worth reproducing at length here:

One miracle was wrought among ourselves, which, though no greater than those I have mentioned, was yet so signal and conspicuous, that I suppose there is no inhabitant of Hippo who did not either see or hear of it, none who could possibly forget it. There were seven brothers and three sisters of a noble family of the Cappadocian Cæsarea, who were cursed by their mother, a new-made widow, on account of some wrong they had done her, and which she bitterly resented, and who were visited with so severe a punishment from Heaven, that all of them were seized with a hideous shaking in all their limbs. Unable, while presenting this loathsome appearance, to endure the eyes of their fellow-citizens, they wandered over almost the whole Roman world, each following his own direction. Two of them came to Hippo, a brother and a sister, Paulus and Palladia, already known in many other places by the fame of their wretched lot. Now it was about fifteen days before Easter when they came, and they came daily to church, and specially to the relics of the most glorious Stephen, praying that God might now be appeased, and restore their former health. There, and wherever they went, they attracted the attention of every one. Some who had seen them elsewhere, and knew the cause of their trembling, told others as occasion offered. Easter arrived, and on the Lord's day, in the morning, when there was now a large crowd present, and the young man was holding the bars of the holy place where the relics were, and praying, suddenly he fell down, and lay precisely as if asleep, but not trembling as he was wont to do even in sleep. All present were astonished. Some were alarmed, some were moved with pity; and while some were for lifting him up, others prevented them, and said they should rather wait and see what would result. And behold! he rose up, and trembled no more, for he was healed, and stood quite well, scanning those who were scanning him. Who then refrained himself from praising God? The whole church was filled with the voices of those who were shouting and congratulating him. Then they came running to me, where I was sitting ready to come into the church. One after another they throng in, the last comer telling me as news what the first had told me already; and while I rejoiced and inwardly gave God thanks, the young man himself also enters, with a number of others, falls at my knees, is raised up to receive my kiss. We go in to the congregation: the church was full, and ringing with the

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<sup>50</sup> Burgess, 191.

<sup>51</sup> Ruthven notes, "Later, Augustine repudiated this position, and in chapter 22 of his *City of God* provides samples of over seventy miracles he recorded in and around his churches. He complains in 22,8 that contemporary miracles are relatively unknown not because they no longer occur, but simply because of suppressed communication and because people are conditioned (perhaps from statements like his own, above) to disbelieve them"; Jon Mark Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata: The Protestant Polemic on Postbiblical Miracles* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 30.

shouts of joy, “Thanks to God! Praised be God!” every one joining and shouting on all sides, “I have healed the people,” and then with still louder voice shouting again. Silence being at last obtained, the customary lessons of the divine Scriptures were read. And when I came to my sermon, I made a few remarks suitable to the occasion and the happy and joyful feeling, not desiring them to listen to me, but rather to consider the eloquence of God in this divine work. The man dined with us, and gave us a careful account of his own, his mother’s, and his family’s calamity. Accordingly, on the following day, after delivering my sermon, I promised that next day I would read his narrative to the people. And when I did so, the third day after Easter Sunday, I made the brother and sister both stand on the steps of the raised place from which I used to speak; and while they stood there their pamphlet was read. The whole congregation, men and women alike, saw the one standing without any unnatural movement, the other trembling in all her limbs; so that those who had not before seen the man himself saw in his sister what the divine compassion had removed from him. In him they saw matter of congratulation, in her subject for prayer. Meanwhile, their pamphlet being finished, I instructed them to withdraw from the gaze of the people; and I had begun to discuss the whole matter somewhat more carefully, when lo! as I was proceeding, other voices are heard from the tomb of the martyr, shouting new congratulations. My audience turned round, and began to run to the tomb. The young woman, when she had come down from the steps where she had been standing, went to pray at the holy relics, and no sooner had she touched the bars than she, in the same way as her brother, collapsed, as if falling asleep, and rose up cured. While, then, we were asking what had happened, and what occasioned this noise of joy, they came into the basilica where we were, leading her from the martyr’s tomb in perfect health. Then, indeed, such a shout of wonder rose from men and women together, that the exclamations and the tears seemed like never to come to an end. She was led to the place where she had a little before stood trembling. They now rejoiced that she was like her brother, as before they had mourned that she remained unlike him; and as they had not yet uttered their prayers in her behalf, they perceived that their intention of doing so had been speedily heard. They shouted God’s praises without words, but with such a noise that our ears could scarcely bear it. What was there in the hearts of these exultant people but the faith of Christ, for which Stephen had shed his blood?<sup>52</sup>

There are many stunning features of this story, but the one most relevant to this thesis is the fact that, even for someone at least theoretically committed to a proto-cessasionist position, Augustine was willing and able to acknowledge not only that a genuine miracle had occurred in his midst. He was able to connect this miracle to its missiological import. Namely, that, “such a shout of wonder rose from men and women together,” and that “exclamations and the tears seemed like never to come to an end.” The miracle was a sign which pointed the people of God

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<sup>52</sup> Augustine, *The City of God*, Translated by Rev. Marcus Dods. In, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. by Philip Schaff, vol. 2, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdemans, 1886), 22.8.

to their savior. Paulus and Palladia were inspired by the story of Stephen, who died bearing witness to Christ. Now they were healed, and the miracle had the same effect—the people witnessed to the wonder of the risen Jesus.

### Conclusions

At the end of his book, *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church*, Dr. Ronald Kydd notes:

It is staggering to watch the little band of fishermen evolve over centuries until it becomes one of the most dominant features of the Greek and Latin world. The Church grew astonishingly in size, power, and influence. When we look for explanations for the growth, we have to start with the Galilean Himself. His divine life and resurrection from the dead gave Him His magnetism. But the sending of the Holy Spirit was extremely important, too. . . . A part of this whole scene were the gifts of the Spirit. Very frequently it seems, God prompted someone to minister to others. . . . These were the *charismata*, the gifts of the Spirit, moments when the grace of God would break into human affairs in a special way.<sup>53</sup>

This brief overview of the employment and importance of the *charismata* in the early church has demonstrated three historically verifiable facts. First, the cessationist contention that the supernatural gifts died away with the Apostles is historically untenable. Second, the gifts appear to be more common the closer one moves historically to the time of the Apostles, as there seems to have been an ongoing struggle between the ecstatic, prophetic leadership of the church and the monarchical episcopate. Yet the third point seems obvious, the *charismata* were nonetheless a vital feature of the early church, part of its mission strategy, its apologetic, and its life. Attempting to understand the explosive spread of Christianity apart from the historical witness of its key actors of the miraculous power of the church can only be based on an *a priori* belief that the *charismata* were not a feature (or if they were, not an important feature) of the early church. Such an ahistorical conclusion would negatively effect the

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<sup>53</sup> Kydd, 86.

church's missionary strategy in the future, until such a time as the *charismata* might be practiced again. Such a time shall presently become the subject of our study as we examine the next most charismatic period of church history—the period in which we now find ourselves.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE *CHARISMATA* IN THE MODERN AGE (1900-PRESENT)

A good deal of research and debate has gone into the origins of the modern Pentecostal/Charismatic movement around the world.<sup>1</sup> While the origins of modern charismatic practice are certainly interesting, more relevant to this thesis is how these practices were put into use and why they were sought after in the first place. Therefore we will examine those origins of the movement with an eye to their missiological significance. In this chapter, our examination shall take us briefly through the development of the modern Pentecostal/Charismatic movement (hereafter referred to as MPCM) with a particular eye toward understanding the motivations which have driven so many to seek the *charismata* in the modern age. We shall shortly see that it was missions and gospel advancement that lay at the heart of this movement.

#### Development of the Modern Pentecostal Charismatic Movement

Many will place the beginnings of the MPCM with the ministry of Charles Parham, William Seymour, or both. But the story of history does not allow us to place the MPCM in the hands of just one man. There were certainly others who preceded him to emphasize the necessity of the *charismata* for the completion of the task of modern missions. The MPCM seems to have

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<sup>1</sup> The number of titles available to research this topic is dizzying. A small sampling includes a host of books by Vinson Synan (*The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, et. al.), writers as liberal as Harvey Cox (*Fire from Heaven*), and theological research from Guy Duffield, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Wayne Grudem, and Craig Keener.

arisen from at least three distinct streams: the Wesleyan/Methodist movement, the following holiness movement, and the Asuza Street Revival. This study shall consider those origins in turn, beginning with the Wesleyan/Methodist movement.

One could not simply say that Wesley was a charismatic. That would be anachronistic. But the theological and missiological foundations that the Wesleyan/Methodist movement laid were the structure upon which much MPCM theology and experience developed—particularly with the doctrine of entire sanctification and the experience of revivalism. Wesley’s own account of his experience of entire sanctification was—especially for its day—quite mystical. He wrote of that fateful day of January 1, 1739 as follows:

Mr. Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutchins, and my brother Charles, were present at our love-feast in Fetter-Lane, with about sixty of our brethren. About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily ipon us, inasmuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of His Majesty, we broke out with one voice, “We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.”<sup>2</sup>

What is more interesting than simply the mystical nature of this account is the way that Wesley’s followers interpreted his experience. His dear friend and most trusted advisor, John Fletcher, argued that, in reality, this “second-blessing” of entire sanctification was really the baptism of the Holy Spirit. While Wesley never embraced this connection himself, Fletcher was appointed to lead the Methodist societies after him.<sup>3</sup> Even more nascent to this study, it was this doctrine of Spirit-empowered entire sanctification that served as a key theological motivation for Wesley’s work in the United States. Vinson Synan, an historian of this movement, summarized the connection by saying:

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<sup>2</sup> M. E. Redford, *The Rise of the Church of the Nazarene*. (Kansas City, 1951), 34.

<sup>3</sup> Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdemans, 1997), 7.



When Methodism was transplanted to America, the doctrine of entire sanctification came along with it. The first Methodist preacher to come to British North America was Captain Thomas Webb. . . . In the first recorded Methodist sermon in America in 1766, Webb declared: “The words of the text were written by the Apostles after the act of justification had passed on them. But, you see my friends, this was not enough for them. They must receive the Holy Ghost after this. So must you. You must be sanctified, but you are not. You are only Christians in part. You have not received the Holy Ghost. I know it. I can feel your spirits hanging about me like dead flesh.”<sup>4</sup>

This was the theological beginning of the MPCM, with its emphasis on another experience with the Holy Spirit to enable mission. This emphasis appeared to have quite an effect, as Methodism spread rapidly across the New World. As mentioned, though, Methodism was not merely an important theological foundation for the MPCM, but also provided an important experiential foundation, with its ecstatic, exuberant forms of worship. Synan notes:

At times the emotions of the sanctified Methodists would exceed the limits of control. “Some would be seized with with a trembling, and in a few moments drop on the floor as if they were dead; while others were embracing each other with streaming eyes, and all were lost in wonder, love, and praise,” wrote one observer. Anotehr noticed that some wept for grief while others shouted for joy “so that it was hard to distinguish one from the other.” At times the congregations would “raise a great shout” that could be heard for miles around. All this the placid Anglican [Devereaux] Jarratt observed with some awe, later observing that as the emotional element abated “the work of conviction and conversion abated too.”<sup>5</sup>

Notice the connection that Synan’s witness makes between what he observes as emotion and the work of conversion. This kind of revivalism would come to mark the MPCM, and still does.

A second precursor to the MPCM can be found in the holiness movement(s) that sprang from the Methodist/Wesleyan streams which ran in the 18th and 19th centuries. Still many decades before either Parham or Seymour, A.J. Gordon was advocating for the pursuit of miracles in Christian ministry. Gordon was deeply influenced by the revivalism leading up to his day and

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<sup>4</sup> J. F. Hurst, *The History of American Methodism*. (New York, 1902), 3:1252.

<sup>5</sup> Synan, 9.

with a passion for the church to live more fully on mission and believed that there was more to the work of the Spirit than just personal sanctification. For Gordon, the preaching of the gospel and the demonstration of its power went hand-in-glove. In his 1882 work, *The Ministry of Healing*, he wrote:

Christ's ministry was a two-fold ministry, effecting constantly the souls and the bodies of men. "Thy sins are forgiven thee," and "Be whole of thy plague," are parallel announcements of the Saviour's work which are found constantly running on side by side. The ministry of the apostles, under the guidance of the Comforter, is the exact facsimile of the Master's. Preaching the kingdom and healing the sick; redemption for the soul and deliverance for the body—these are its great offices and announcements.<sup>6</sup>

Gordon's passion to see the church regain her footing in the gifts of grace came not from a preference for a particular worship, preaching, or meeting style. Rather, it arose from a deep longing to see the global mission of the church advance, just as it had done in the early church. He wants to see the church dislodged from a position of needless comfort and engaged in the exercise of gospel advance. He said, "It is not altogether strange, therefore, that when the Church forgot that 'her citizenship is in heaven,' and began to establish herself in luxury and splendor on earth, she should cease to exhibit the supernatural gifts of heaven."<sup>7</sup> Gordon's writings were widely distributed and went a long way to influence many to become open to the *charismata*.

Others of his day who were walking on the cusp of revival shared his conviction. After his career as a revivalist began to shift, Charles Finney took a position of Professor of Systematic Theology at the newly formed Oberlin College. Finney developed a whole theology around the idea of Spirit-baptism as preparation for ministry called *Oberlin Theology*.<sup>8</sup> Though not known for his advocacy of the *charismata*, the ministry to D.L. Moody nonetheless seemed to be

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<sup>6</sup> A.J. Gordon, *The Ministry of Healing: Miracles of Cure in all Ages*. (Boston, MA: Howard Garnett, 1883), 19.

<sup>7</sup> Gordon, 64.

<sup>8</sup> Eddie Hyatt, *2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity*. (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 1996), 128.

marked by special outpourings of the gifts. After coming to join a group of men who had just been with Moody at a meeting, the Rev. R. Boyd, a baptist minister was astounded as what he saw.

When I got to the rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association, Victoria Hall, London, I found the meeting on fire. The young men were speaking with tongues and prophesying. What on earth did it mean? Only that Moody had addressed them that afternoon."<sup>9</sup>

Moody's heir apparent, R. A. Torrey, agreed that the *charismata* were indeed for today. But more interestingly is *what* Torrey argued was the purpose of the *charismata*—he believes that they are given for an individual's line of service to God, connecting yet again the *charismata* to the mission and message of the gospel. He wrote:

The gifts vary with the different lines of service to which God calls different persons. The church is a body, and different members of the body have different functions and the Spirit imparts to the one who is baptized with the Spirit those gifts which fit him for the service to which God has called him. It is very important to bear this in mind. Through the failure to see this, many have gone entirely astray on the whole subject.<sup>10</sup>

Synan summarized the movements of the late 19th century and their influence on the MPCM, saying,

In the decade of the 1890's, a major shift began to appear among many of the holiness leaders emphasizing the 'Pentecostal' aspects of the second blessing. This led to a change in terminology . . . the pentecostal idea was pervading more of Christian thought and aspiration more than ever before."<sup>11</sup>

A shift was happening, which caused holiness preachers to seek the Spirit for more than just personal holiness. Larry Hart notes:

Nineteenth-century Holiness preaching increasingly reverberated Pentecostal themes, as the focus began to shift from purity to power. In addition, many of the key leaders of the

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<sup>9</sup> Gordon Lindsay, "The Speaking in Tongues in Church History," *Voice of Healing*, August 1964, 3.

<sup>10</sup> R.A. Torrey, *The Person and Work of The Holy Spirit*, (Chicago: Revell Co., 1910), 106.

<sup>11</sup> Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 50.

nineteenth and twentieth-century Evangelical revival claimed some sort of empowering experience subsequent to their conversion that transformed their ministries. And many called this anointing “the baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Unfortunately, modern Evangelicals have forgotten—or worse, suppressed—this fact.<sup>12</sup>

All of this development (and indeed much more than can be written about here) before the turn of the 20th century was lingering in the background of thought when Charles Parham, a young, itinerant evangelist, began to work for the goal of global evangelization and desire the power to get the mission accomplished. It’s important here to note the streams which came together to form Parham’s convictions. Synan explains:

Parham began his ministerial career in Linwood, Kansas, as a supply pastor in the Methodist Episcopal Church. From Methodism he received the teaching of entire sanctification as a second work of grace. . . . During the 1890’s Parham had also come in contact with the more radical elements of the holiness movement, and after much study had adopted the doctrine of faith healing as a part of “the atonement.” He had also been in services with . . . a “baptism with the Holy Ghost and with Fire.”<sup>13</sup>

He was certainly not the first to experience the *charismata* in his day. In fact, the appearance of *glossolalia* seems to have washed upon American shores in large part due to the Welsh Revival of 1904.<sup>14</sup> Upon hearing of others’ experiences, he went seeking these gifts himself. Hyatt notes that Parham visited John Alexander Dowie’s work in Chicago, Malone’s *God’s Bible School* in Cincinnati, Simpson’s work in Nyack, New York, and A.J. Gordon’s work in Boston. He left convinced that in order to fulfill the great commission, great power from God would be required.<sup>15</sup> This led Parham to start his own work back in his home base of Topeka. What followed was an experiment in search of the power of the Holy Spirit. Students who

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<sup>12</sup> Larry Hart, “Spirit Baptism,” in *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the 21st Century*, ed. Vinson Synan, (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma, 2011), 263.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 86.

<sup>15</sup> Hyatt, 137.

attended his *Bethel* school studied the Bible, with a particular emphasis on learning about the baptism of the Holy Spirit as described in the book of Acts. Then, during a Watchnight Service (1900-1901), his students began to experiencing what they described as a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and many spoke in tongues. When Parham returned from a preaching engagement, he had a similar experience.<sup>16</sup>

An interestingly phenomenon sprung from this “Topeka Pentecost.” Namely, what some have called xenoglossalalia, or the gift of other languages. As a result of this Topeka Pentecost, Parham formulated the doctrine that tongues was the “Bible evidence” of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It was this experience that led Parham to single out speaking in tongues as the only evidence of having received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and sought to normalize it in Christian experience.<sup>17</sup> He also taught that tongues was a supernatural impartation of human languages (xenoglossolalia) for the purpose of world evangelization. Henceforth, he taught, missionaries need not study foreign languages since they would be able to preach in miraculous tongues all over the world.<sup>18</sup> This would be consonant with the aforementioned first use of the gift of tongues. In 1895 the widely read Wesleyan-holiness author and editor W. B. Godbey predicted that the “gift of language” was “destined to play a conspicuous part in the evangelization of the heathen world, amid the glorious prophetic fulfillment of the latter days.” He went on to say, “All missionaries in heathen lands should seek and expect this Gift to enable

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<sup>16</sup> It is interesting to note that these “tongues” were identified as languages, not merely as unknown syllables. One woman was reported as speaking Chinese, and Parham himself said that when he received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he “worshipped the Lord in the Swedish tongue” for a few hours; see Hyatt, 139.

<sup>17</sup> Synan, 89.

<sup>18</sup> Vinson Synan, “The Origins of the Pentecostal Movement.” in *The Origins of the Pentecostal Movement*, April 17, 2006; available from [http://www.oru.edu/library/special\\_collections/holy\\_spirit\\_research\\_center/pentecostal\\_history.php#origins](http://www.oru.edu/library/special_collections/holy_spirit_research_center/pentecostal_history.php#origins); Internet; accessed September 10, 2015.

them to preach fluently in the vernacular tongue, at the same time not depreciating their own efforts:<sup>19</sup>

Sometimes this anticipation brought unusual testimonies. William Taylor, Methodist missionary bishop for Africa, told of a young woman he had appointed who began her work by preaching through an interpreter. When he visited the mission station two or three months later, she was preaching fluently in the native language. Apparently, the same thing happened to others among his missionaries as well." In South India in 1881 Miss C. M. Reade of the Highways and Hedges Mission, who knew a few words in Hindi, prayed to receive the language to communicate directly to her hearers. As a result, "the power came to her as a gift from God.' One month she was unable to do more than put two or three sentences together; while the next month, she was able to preach and pray without waiting for a word. Those who heard her could only say with herself, 'It was a gift from above'"<sup>20</sup>

Again, what must be noted here is the use of this *charismata*, which was exclusively missionary. This gift of tongues was sought and practiced as means to bring the message of the gospel to people who had not yet heard.

Not long after Parham's Bethel School closed, he found himself in Houston, TX, where he met William Joseph Seymour. It was Parham who taught Seymour about his experience, and how to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Seymour prayed and prayed for this experience, but his schooling under Parham was cut short when he received a call to pastor a work in Los Angeles. This would become the occasion for the famous Asuza Street Revival, to which many in the MPCM trace their origins. On April 14, 1906, the first of the revival meetings began there, and the results of these gatherings are still being felt in the world today.<sup>21</sup> It was from this movement

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<sup>19</sup> W.B. Godbey, *Spiritual Gifts and Graces*, (Cincinnati: God's Revivalist Office, 1895), 43; Found in Gary McGee, "Shortcut to Language Preparation? Radical Evangelicals, Missions, and the Gift of Tongues," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. 25 (2001): 118-120.

<sup>20</sup> Gary McGee, "Shortcut to Language Preparation? Radical Evangelicals, Missions, and the Gift of Tongues." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. 25 (2001): 120.

<sup>21</sup> There were, of course, many notable criticisms and problems with this movement. I am not naive to them, I simply have chosen not to address them here as I am focusing on the purpose of the *charismata*. There have been many who noted the racial lines that were drawn here, as well as many of the oddities that came from this revival. I don't feel the need to discuss it here.

that the Assemblies of God was born (the largest MPCM denomination), the Church of God in Christ, and others. The Asuza Street revivals started for many what would become a future-shaping interest in the *charismata*, with an emphasis in using them toward the completion of global missions.

### The Charismatic Movement And The Third Wave

The Pentecostal movement continued to grow around the world into the early part of the 20th century. However, an important development in the movement occurred within what has come to be called the Charismatic Movement. If the Pentecostal movement had as a chief evidence the gift of tongues, this movement regarded the gift of healing. Men like William Branham, Oral Roberts, A. A. Allen, Jack Coe, T. L. Osborn, and Kenneth Hagin all appeared on the scene at this time, holding large revival meetings where attendees would experience healing. While this movement was rent by strife because of the egos of the men involved, it nonetheless links the Pentecostal movement to the second-wave of the Charismatic Movement.<sup>22</sup>

In the April 1960 edition of *Time* magazine, a story was carried about an Episcopal rector named Dennis Bennett, who was the leader of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California. Controversially, he spoke in tongues.<sup>23</sup> This story, and Bennett's subsequent firing, marks the beginning of Charismatic Movement (sometimes called the Charismatic Renewal). Bennett explains:

Like a prairie fire fanned by the wind, Pentecost spread quickly, penetrating most of the historic Protestant denominations. Charismatic prayer groups sprang up across the country. In these informal gatherings, participants sang praises, prayed spontaneously and

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<sup>22</sup> Hyatt, 170.

<sup>23</sup> See *Time Magazine*, April 1960, 64-82.

unashamedly spoke and sang in tongues; they enthusiastically ministered to one another in the various gifts of the Holy Spirit.<sup>24</sup>

This movement was followed by a “Third Wave,” rounding out the MPCM to much of what can be seen today.<sup>25</sup> While there are many Pentecostal and charismatic denominations, the openness and dependency upon the use of the *charismata* for the advance of the church is visible everywhere. This third wave consisted of mainline Evangelicals who moved in the *charismata*, but who disdained labels such as "pentecostal" or "charismatic." By 1990 this group numbered some 33,000,000 members in the world.<sup>26</sup>

### The Present Situation In Missions

If the goal of the MPCM is global missions and evangelism, then the movement appears to be successful. Furthermore, if another goal was to permeate and alter the theology of conservative evangelicals in this regard, it has also been successful. Today, even the historically cessationist Southern Baptist Convention has altered their position on the *charismata*, now allowing their missionaries (through the International Mission Board) to practice these sign-gifts. Frank Page, now president of the SBC's executive committee, worried that the former rules, barring the practice of the *charismata* went too far, saying “I just think in that one area there is a possible interpretation of a private prayer language [in Scripture] that we need to be very careful about saying, no,” he told Baptist Press in 2006. “If there is some scriptural possibility there, [a

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<sup>24</sup> Hyatt, 176.

<sup>25</sup> Wagner was the first to delineate the first, second, and third waves of the MPCM. See John Wimber, *Power Evangelism* (San Francisco, CA: Harper And Row, 1986), 122-135.

<sup>26</sup> Vinson Synan, "The Origins of the Pentecostal Movement." in *The Origins of the Pentecostal Movement*, April 17, 2006, available from [http://www.oru.edu/library/special\\_collections/holy\\_spirit\\_research\\_center/pentecostal\\_history.php#origins](http://www.oru.edu/library/special_collections/holy_spirit_research_center/pentecostal_history.php#origins); Internet; accessed on September 10, 2015.



policy forbidding it for missionaries] makes me nervous.”<sup>27</sup> The current present of IMB, Dr. David Platt, characterized the shift saying, “This is a raising of the bar in all the areas that matter most.”<sup>28</sup>

Today, one in four American Christians identifies themselves as Pentecostal/Charismatic.<sup>29</sup> Worldwide, the MPCM is the fastest-growing part of the Church globally and the fastest-growing religious group in the world.<sup>30</sup> This has large implications on the shape of future global missions. Pentecostals now comprise a significant minority of the population in many countries: Guatemala (20%), Brazil (15), Chile (9), Kenya (33), Nigeria (18) South Africa (10). Adding charismatics and independent churches, the significance only grows: Guatemala (60%), Brazil (49), Kenya (56), Philippines (44). In the future, then, it seems likely that many majority world countries will have populations in which MPCM Christians are either in the majority or comprise a very significant minority.<sup>31</sup> It seems that the *charismata* are playing a significant role in global missions, and there appears to be no sign of this stream of missionary activity slowing down. Actually, the reverse is true—it appears to be increasing in pace slightly.<sup>32</sup> In his lecture at the 2013 Wheaton Theology Conference, Birmingham University Professor Allan Anderson

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<sup>27</sup> Bob Smietana, "International Mission Board Drops Ban on Speaking in Tongues," ChristianityToday.com, May 14, 2015, available from <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2015/may-web-only/imb-ban-speaking-in-tongues-baptism-baptist-missionary.html>; Internet; accessed September 10, 2015.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> "Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals," Pew Research Centers Religion Public Life Project, October 4, 2006, available from <http://www.pewforum.org/2006/10/05/spirit-and-power/>; Internet; accessed September 10, 2015.

<sup>30</sup> Allan Anderson, "Global Pentecostalism," A Paper presented at the Wheaton Theology Conference, 3 April 2015, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Allan Anderson, "Global Pentecostalism," A Paper presented at the Wheaton Theology Conference, 3 April 2015, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL.

explained and explored some of the significant factors surrounding the MPCM and global missions. He noted that there are currently 630+ million Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians in the world today. In 1900 there were almost none. By 1970 there were roughly 63 million. It was the fastest growing segment of the church in the 20th century. That kind of growth is unparalleled in the history of missions.<sup>33</sup>

What is more interesting, however, is Anderson's explanation of why such dynamic growth has occurred. He identifies three factors that are most relevant to our discussion. First, Anderson notes that the MPCM was birthed as a missionary movement. Theologically, evangelism lay at the center of early Pentecostalism, and that emphasis has remained. The MPCM believes that the *charismata* are a critical piece of missionary hardware, not to be left home without. Another factor Anderson illuminated was the MPCM's ability to explain and embrace a supernatural world. Western Christianity has largely syncretized with secular view of the world, if not philosophically, at least practically. Yet, most of the world is not trapped in the immanent frame of the secular worldview.<sup>34</sup> The MPCM is already conversant in a supernatural world, and therefore its assumptions lie within the pre-existing beliefs of those to whom any MPCM missionary may find himself. Third, the MPCM comes from a movement that embraced mass communication and modern marketing strategies. This can be seen from the flyers for the Asuza Street Mission, to the televangelists of the 1950's and 60's, all the way to the modern world of social media and internet communication. Learning the skill of global communication was never something the MPCM had to do, because it was birthed in it. In sum, within a century of its inception, the MPCM has come to almost every country in the world, influenced every

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> James K. A. Smith, *How Not To Be Secular*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 48.

form of Christianity, and come to be the most significant development in the study of missions to date.<sup>35</sup>

Dr. David Martyn Lloyd Jones wrote his book *The Sovereign Spirit* at the height of the third wave. Commenting on all that he has seen come before him in the MPCM and seeking to give clarity to what had become somewhat confused in the church, he wrote:

In the New Testament and, indeed, in the whole of the Bible, we are taught that the baptism with the Spirit is attended by certain gifts. Joel in his prophecy, quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost, foretells this. . . . Joel, and the other prophets who also spoke of it, indicated that in the age which was to come, and which came with the Lord Jesus Christ and the baptism of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, there should be some unusual authentication of the message. . . . My friends, this is to me one of the most urgent matters at this hour. With the church as she is and the world as it is, the greatest need today is the power of God through his Spirit in the church that we may testify not only to the power of the Spirit, but to the glory and praise of the one and only Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord, Son of God, Son of Man.<sup>36</sup>

What conclusions can we draw about the missiological connections of the MPCM and modern missions? This question was directly addressed by Dr. Byron Klauss in Vinson Synan's collection of Ressays, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the 21st Century*. He notes that mission is simply part of the DNA of the MPCM, because it was never just a duty to be fulfilled. Mission was an irreducible part of the MPCM's entire reason for being.<sup>37</sup> His assessment of the MPCM's connection to mission is helpfully summarized:

This radical strategy was a uniquely pneumatological approach to mission that affirmed a belief in the need for a subsequent spiritual empowerment that send the recipient toward a destiny connected to the continuing redemptive mission of Jesus Christ. The empowerment was for the purpose of world evangelism, and the soon return of Christ made it necessary to "work while it is day." (See John 9:4.) This work, empowered by the

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<sup>35</sup> Allan Anderson, "Global Pentecostalism," A Paper presented at the Wheaton Theology Conference, 3 April 2015, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL.

<sup>36</sup> David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Sovereign Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1985), 26, 33.

<sup>37</sup> Byron D. Klauss, "Reflection on Pentecostal Mission for the Twenty-First Century," in *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the 21st Century*, ed. Vinson Synan, (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma, 2011), 130.

Holy Spirit, was accompanied by signs and wonders, thus energizing missionary efforts and hastening the return of Christ.<sup>38</sup>

Concluding this study of the development of the MPCM, one can observe some unifying realities over this dynamic, often messy, but critically important feature of modern Christianity. First, the foundations of the MPCM are evangelistic. Concern for missions and the expansion of the faith lies at the center of the MPCM's roots. Second, the MPCM has developed in at least three waves, which have renewed interest the three *charismata* which this paper has outlined with most concern. Today, the MPCM is made up of roughly the same number of people who live on the continents of Europe and North America combined. So how should the church understand this? Furthermore, what conclusion can be drawn regarding this movement's effect on strategic missions? It is to these questions that our attention now turns.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 131.

## CHAPTER 7

### FINAL OBSERVATIONS AND A PROPOSED MISSION STRATEGY

In this brief study we have examined the supernatural acts of God through his people from two perspectives, mainly: the biblical and the historical. In the Old Testament it was observed that the Spirit rushing upon a servant fitted him for a particular task of deliverance, word of warning, or prophetic insight into the future. However, the experience of the supernatural in the time of the Old Testament was incomplete, and pointed forward to a time in the history of God's people when the Spirit would dwell with them as fully as Yahweh inhabited the Holy of Holies. At the coming of Christ, his life, death, and resurrection, that promise was given. After Pentecost, the power of the Spirit came to dwell in all of God's people, enabling them to perform signs and wonders like the heroes of ancient Israel. Yet these signs were not any longer pointing forward to a deliverer to come, but bore testimony to the gospel of the great hero who had already arrived. From a Scriptural perspective it has thus been concluded that God has given the Holy Spirit to enable those whom he called to accomplish their given mission and testify to the good news of Jesus Christ.

This study then took a tour through the ancient church, examining the way the *charismata* were used in the most primitive forms of Christianity. From the days of and after the apostles, the *Didache* revealed that the missions strategy involved the itinerant, ecstatic prophet. As the church grew and interacted with the Roman world, the *charismata* remained, and formed legs in the apologetic stool of men like Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, and Irenaeus. As they

worked to advance the faith into surrounding culture and defend the gospel from being maligned by heretics and splinter groups, the presence and activity of the *charismata* came to be seen as a proof of their veracity and their faithfulness to the gospel. It seems historical untenable and unwise to attempt to understand the rapid and fruitful growth of the early church apart from its dependance upon supernatural acts which testified to the central supernatural act of the Christian faith—the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Following our examination of the early church, attention was turned to the modern church. Since the present moment is characterized by the dynamic growth of the modern Pentecostal/Charismatic movement, its origins in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was examined. The foundations of this movement were built upon evangelistic zeal, and the desire for and practice of the *charismata* have formed one of the most significant changes to missionary strategy in since the early church. Since its inception, the MPCM has experienced unparalleled growth, and has become one of the most important features of modern Christianity and global missions.

### Historical Similarities

This study of the Scriptures, the early church, and the MPCM have led this author to observe five similarities between the church of the book of *Acts*, the early church, and the MPCM. The first and most obvious feature is (1) supernatural power. The church of *Acts* certainly walked in such power that the *charismata* were common and important. And unless one is willing to discount a striking amount of historical testimony, the early church experienced the same *charismata*, though waning in commonality into the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. And if one is equally prejudiced, one might also attempt to write off the experiences of some 600

million people in the world today, but this seems unwise and unnecessary. It seems to make much more sense to simply observe that the Holy Spirit has been working great sign-gifts in the church since its inception, and that is unlikely to change until the *parousia*.

(2) Social Alienation—The second commonality that these three historical expressions of the *charismata* have in common is that they were held on the fringes of society. Now this may sound like I'm tearing down with one hand the thesis I've sought to defend with the other, but that is not the case. The practice of the *charismata* by the Apostolic church, the early church, and the modern church makes the church look quite different than the rest of the surrounding culture. Yet, there is something evangelistically quite powerful in the practice. This tension between social conformity and radical differentiation is not new. The church has always had to struggle with being in the world but not of it. The *charismata* are one of the ways this is most acutely manifest. These gifts are given to the church for her expansion into the world from which she is to be so very different. Yet, she is not to be so different that she does not seek the powerful gifts of the Spirit to bring the gospel into the world.

(3) Contextual Sensibility—The long view of history may judge post-enlightenment Western culture's affinity for a shrunken, secular frame to be amongst the greatest of historical oddities. It seems odd to those of us raised in this secular worldview that there might be Christians who practice supernatural gifts, even though we believe in a God who is, by definition, supernatural. Yet, as Anderson notes, the *charismata* make sense of the world for a people who understand that there is more to this world than just what is seen. In the apostolic and early church, the world was broader in the minds of the people than just the seen, physical reality with which they were presented. The same is true of most the world today. Thus, a gospel that does not just have other-worldly news but commands other-worldly power doesn't just make

sense to those who hear it. It is the best kind of news there is—that there is a God who can act in the world today because He has acted decisively in the world through His Son. This makes sense in any context in which it is said.

(4) Rapid Expansion - The Apostolic, early, and modern church is rapidly expanding. This has not always been so, and it seems to be a critical feature associated with the practice of the *charismata*. It is a commonality unique to these three moments that the church grew so dramatically, in such frontier territory. The *charismata* were critical in Acts, used in the early church, and are a unique feature of the modern missions movement.

The observation that *charismata* were an essential part of the mission strategy of the early church *and* the modern church is critically important to the modern missions effort. As the church expands globally the tension-filled terrain of gospel and culture will most likely force followers of Jesus, in contexts of violence and injustice, to read the book of Acts and identify with their brothers and sisters of the early church. Our contemporary vanguard of Spirit-empowered believers will obediently follow Jesus, empowered by the Spirit, happy to pay the price, just as their earliest fore-bearers did.<sup>1</sup>

### Proposing A Missions Model

It may seem presumptuous for a paper as short as this one to venture to propose a way of doing ministry. Yet the practical conclusions seem obvious upon reflection. Given that all Christians of all kinds believe in the kind of God described in ecumenical creeds (Apostle's, Nicean, and Athanasian), and given also that the MPCM seems to permeate all such churches, denominations, and movements, some practical applications seem important. It seems without

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<sup>1</sup> Byron D. Klauss, "Reflection on Pentecostal Mission for the Twenty-First Century," in *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the 21st Century*, ed. Vinson Synan, (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma, 2011), 133.



doubt that the *charismata* were normative and critical in the life of the Apostolic and post-Apostolic church. It also seems obvious that they are normative and critical in much of the modern mission of the church. It is my particular contention that this should be so—that it is, in fact, a good and right strategy for the whole church to embrace if she means to fulfill the Great Commission.

As a first step in this strategy I would advocate skepticism toward the cessationist impulse to cap or contain what God may do with regard to the *charismata*. While countless holy, good, and noble Christians hold this position, it seems to be at odds with the biblical and historical perspectives outlined in the work above. Humbly, this author suggests a skepticism not just toward the reports of the *charismata* which reach our ears. But also I would urge a skepticism of one's inherent disbelief of the supernatural—a disbelief which may be more an anachronism of the present, Western, post-enlightenment secularism with which all in the West are vexed to contend, rather than a derivation of deep study of the Scriptures. When the Apostle Paul wrote, “love hopes all things, believes all things, endures all things . . .” this may have been part of what was meant—to believe the report of the Imam to whom an Angel appeared and led him to a Bible.<sup>2</sup> Or, to believe the story of the family in India who now follow Jesus because a missionary raised from the dead the son of the matriarch, who led her whole family to follow Christ.<sup>3</sup> It seems to me that Christian love compels us to take seriously the testimony of brothers and sisters who say such things, even if it is at odds with one's internal impulse or conviction.

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<sup>2</sup> This story comes from my own movement of churches and ministries. I have actually met this man, who upon seeing a vision of an angel, became a Christian while in a madrasa, found a Bible, and ultimately converted. He is now a missionary in Iran.

<sup>3</sup> This story comes from my friendship with a man in my former church. His family came to faith in Christ because his uncle, the son of the matriarch of the larger family group, was raised from the dead on Easter Sunday in their village by a protestant, charismatic missionary.

A second step will enable the first, which is to practice prayerful gratitude for the *charismata* of the past. One develops faith for what God could do in the present moment by thanking him for what He has done in past ones. Reading through the book of Acts, the testimonies of the martyrs, and the sermons of the fathers, one may find hope and faith for *charismata* rising.

A third recommendation toward a strategy would be that those walking in *charismata* orient their gifts toward evangelism, missions, and church planting. Much thought of the modern church growth movement is practical—how to raise money, find buildings, build websites, etc. None of this is bad. Yet, it is somewhat at variance with the biblical model. What if, along with those strategies, teams of missionaries and church planters had with them powerful evangelists, those with the gift healing, or some who prophesy with great accuracy. The data seems to suggest that such gifts bring growth at a far better rate than good marketing alone.

Finally, and somewhat obviously, prayer is in order. In the Apostolic, early, and even early Pentecostal movements, great amounts of time and energy were devoted to prayer. Prayer for gifts, signs, wonders, and power to do all that God commanded preceded the powerful demonstration of the *charismata*. As the church continues her expansion into the darkness of the unbelieving world, more power must be coupled with better strategy. Prayer is the only way such power can be accessed, handled, and released with all wisdom. May it be in the coming years that the *charismata* are acted rightly, under the authority of Scripture, for the glory of God and the good of all, as a critical part of the missionary strategy of the Church of Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSION

The in-house debate within the modern church seems to have been largely settled by the experience of modern missionaries, church planters, and church leaders. The *charismata* are now a common feature of world-wide Christianity. In this study, I have sought to assess this reality in light of the early church's missionary strategy. Because, the *charismata* were normative and critical to the life and expansion of the Church in the Apostolic and Post-Apostolic ages, I have argued that they should function similarly in modern church life and missions.

The first line of reasoning given to my argument was drawn from the Scriptures. Particularly, we traced the Biblical-Theological theme of God's supernatural acts within the biblical story. From this examination, two patterns emerged: a theological one and a narrative one. Theologically, it was observed that the Spirit is the agent who calls the men of God to into service and empowers the same men for mission. Narratively, the Bible speaks of the Spirit as the present, with-ness of God in the world. The church in the world is now the better Temple where God's Spirit both dwells and dramatically empowers the mission of God in the earth, and a living symbol of the world to come—in both miracle and message.

A brief explanation of precisely what *charismata* this study intended to focus on followed the biblical data. Honing in on the three most controversial in the modern age, we examined the gift of tongues, healing, and New Testament prophecy. A synthesis of the many definitions of the word *charismata* was given as “are free gifts from God to his people for their good and the

accomplishment of the mission.” The gift of tongues was best defined by Wayne Grudem as “prayer or praise spoken in syllables not understood by the speaker,”<sup>1</sup> with the missional significance of bridging language barriers, giving a kind of prophetic insight (accompanied by interpretation), or building up the speaker. The gift of healing was painstakingly observed as being expected of Jesus’ followers and an enormous theme in the gospels, given as signs to testify to the veracity to the words of Jesus. Finally, prophecy was described as telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind.<sup>2</sup> This gift, and its missional significance was noted in the book of Acts and the early church period.

Having thus defined the terms of the discussion, the second line of reasoning given to support the thesis that the *charismata* have a critical importance to the modern mission of the church was drawn from the history of the Church, herself. Beginning with the book of Acts, observation was made related to the importance of the *charismata* to the mission Christ gave the church. This section demonstrated that for the earliest Christians, both during and immediately after the life of the Apostles, the *charismata* weren’t extemporaneous, but mission-critical demonstrations of power testifying to the gospel and growing the missionary zeal of the church.

After examining the role of the *charismata* in the missionary efforts of the earliest Christians we turned our attention to the church fathers, which brought to light three facts. First, the cessationist contention that the supernatural gifts died away with the Apostles is historically untenable. Second, the gifts appear to be more common the closer one moves historically to the time of the Apostles, as there seems to have been an ongoing struggle between the ecstatic, prophetic leadership of the church and the monarchical episcopate. Yet the third point seems

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press: 1994), 1070.

<sup>2</sup> Grudem, 1049.

obvious, the *charismata* were nonetheless a vital feature of the early church, part of its mission strategy, its apologetic, and its life.

Having thoroughly examined the Scriptures and early church history, attention then turned to the examine the Modern Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement (MPCM). Tracing the theological and experiential origins of the movement through the early Methodist and Holiness movements of the 19th century, discovery was made of the origins of this movement in earnest, at Asuza Street. As the MPCM developed it become messy, but also a critically important feature of modern Christianity. The foundations of the MPCM are evangelistic, and this is important to remember. Mission lies at the roots of the MPCM, so that today, the MPCM is made up of roughly the same number of people who live on the continents of Europe and North America combined—the most rapid expansion of any missions movement in the history of the world.

This paper concludes with a plea for missionary unity around a controversial set of activities known as the *charismata*. With the expansion of the global church and the forward movement of the gospel into terrain not afflicted with a bias against the supernatural, the supernatural is happening, if we are to take the accounts of Christians around the world any any degree of seriousness.<sup>3</sup> This leads the author to the four-fold suggestions of the previous chapter, starting with skepticism regarding the cessationist position and its anti-supernatural bias. We should thus be thankful for the many *charisms* of the past which God saw fit to allow, and through which much ground has been gained for the Church. Third, a movement within the current MPCM would toward militating those gifts on the front lines of gospel growth in world, would work powerfully to align the modern practice of the *charismata* with the ancient practice, and would go far to create a unity around a common missiology, even while evangelical unity

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<sup>3</sup> Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford, 2011), 9-11.

around a common theology may take longer. Finally, prayer is in order. For, if the church of this age is to be at all effective in its mission, we must pray. We must pray for the right belief and practice of the *charismata*. We must pray for the mission to be completed, and pray that our perspective on the power God gave for His mission would be made complete in us.

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