

TRAFFIC ON A LESS THAN CALM SEA

Lieutenant Colonel Ian Barr

Holiness and twentieth century renewal movements

The religious phenomenon known today as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was a particular feature of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity in the 20th century. These movements have their roots in the 19th century holiness movement in North America. However, for much of the first half of the 20th century the Pentecostal movement was seen as a deviation from mainstream Christianity, on the fringe of the church at best, but the rise of the Charismatic movement in the second half of the twentieth century changed this perception to some extent.

The other defining characteristic of the two movements has been ecstatic experience.

As we noted in an earlier lecture, the Bible and Church history clearly demonstrate that there has always been a witness to *intense* religious experience. These rare occurrences are what Rudolph Otto would describe as 'Numinous', fear and fascination in the awesome presence of God.

Ecstatic experience is different. It tends to be expressed in great joy, in speaking in tongues or some other form of communication, and in prophecy. There is evidence of this in Saul's experience among the prophets. In the New Testament there is evidence of similar manifestations, for example the friend of Paul 'caught up into the third Heaven'.

In *Echoes and Memories* Bramwell Booth tells of ecstatic experiences amongst early day Salvationists. However, he also explains how these manifestations were left behind when the Army began to move forward as a missionary work. It seems that there was a period of 'release' giving way to the highly organised business of mission.

C. Peter Wagner has suggested that what the Western church witnessed in the twentieth century could be described as *waves of renewal*.

The first wave – the Pentecostal renewal

The revival that broke out in the holiness churches in Los Angeles in 1906 gave birth to what is now called the Pentecostal movement. Many people would trace the movement right to the Azusa Street mission, but it very quickly spread across the city and across the world. It was not only a movement of the Holy Spirit it was also seen as a movement of the people.

One of the difficulties for the established denominations was the great emphasis that was placed on the gift of tongues and upon prophecy and healing at the expense of a clear theology. Many Christians had long believed that these gifts properly belonged only to the apostolic generation – the first Christians – but had ceased to be available to the church.

The absence of theological grounding and the proliferation of small Pentecostal denominations made it relatively easy for the mainstream churches to distance themselves from Pentecostalism. Even the Army moderated its use of language to maintain a clear distance from Pentecostalism. For example, after 1906 the phrase 'the baptism of the Holy Spirit' practically disappeared from Army literature.

The second wave - the Charismatic renewal

A major upheaval took place in 1960 which upset this view of Pentecostalism as a fringe pursuit. The Episcopal (Anglican) Church at Van Nuys, a suburb of Los Angeles, became the centre of what appeared to be a spontaneous upsurge of 'Pentecostal' experience. Far from being on the fringe, this 'charismatic' renewal was taking place in a well-established mainstream church with a long tradition of objective worship and orthodox theology. The story was soon picked up by *Time* magazine and

Newsweek, and St. Mark's Van Nuys became the focus of a revolution which spread across denominational boundaries. In the early days it spread through Anglican, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches, again taking root in denominations with a strong emphasis on doctrine.

If we were to distinguish between Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, the difference would lie in the theological framework which the Pentecostals had been thought to lack, and which the mainstream and churches prized.

The Third Wave

What Wagner identified as the Third Wave seems to have begun with a group of teachers who gravitated towards the Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena in the early 1980's. None of these came from a particularly charismatic background: some were pastors and leaders in established denominations. Their main interests lay in mission and church growth, through which they came to their own experiences of personal renewal.

John Wimber, Jack Deere and C Peter Wagner were among the leading lights. Wimber's teaching took a new turn when the question of 'signs and wonders' came up. His own testimony and that of many others was that 'signs and wonders' became more and more evident in the classes, and took on greater significance in the life and worship of those who were involved.

It would not be true to say that Wimber and the others set out to form a movement. Before this time they were unknown to each other. They were drawn together by common interest and common experience.

By the late 1980's and early 1990's many of these people were widely associated with religious phenomena such as the Toronto Blessing, the prophetic gifts of Paul Cain and others, and what some might regard as a morbid interest in spiritual warfare. Strange to say, in contrast with the two previous waves, the third wave placed no emphasis on the gift of tongues.

Yet under-pinning all of these passing 'Third Wave fashions' lay a continuing commitment to mission, worship, evangelism and the growth of the church. In a sense the phenomenology was the presenting face of a movement that had considerable depth. The phenomena have largely come and gone, but the Third Wave can accurately be said to have created a much wider interest in the study and practice of Christian mission and in the way in which Christians worship.

Holy Trinity Brompton Church in London was, in the early 1990's, notorious for strange happenings and prophetic utterances in the course of its services. That passed, and the lasting legacy of those early days of renewal is the Alpha course, recognised world-wide as a highly effective tool in evangelism and teaching.

A fourth wave?

In his book *The Anointing* Dr. R. T. Kendall, the retired American pastor of Westminster Chapel in London, describes what he calls a *fourth wave*. This arose largely out of his observation of his own congregation and others across the world.

According to Kendall the fourth wave is the coming together of conservative evangelical teaching and preaching with charismatic worship-styles and experience. This can be seen in local congregations as well as in major Christian gatherings. As there is a return to a more conservative theological agenda in many denominations, there is also a willingness to embrace contemporary worship styles and social action.

In the United States this coalition can be seen in events such as *Urbana*, in the United Kingdom at *Greenbelt* and *Spring Harvest*. In most parts of the Christian world there are similar events.

The fourth wave is most obviously seen in the Army's *Roots* conventions held in various parts of the world. It can equally be seen at corps level in the move away from the song-sandwich style of meeting to a less structured approach, and greater emphasis expository preaching.

Biblical references to the baptism of the Holy Spirit

There are seven references to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. These fall into three categories:

Matt. 3:11, Mark 1: 8, Luke 3: 16, John 1: 33

The baptism of John is a preparation for the baptism of the Spirit. Matthew and Luke add 'and with fire' to symbolise purification. John presents this as a quote from Jesus rather than the Baptist.

Acts 1: 5, Acts 11:15-16, 1 Cor. 12: 13

Incorporation of the Gentiles into Christ and the Church.

Acts 1:8

'You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses ...'

There can be little doubt that this 'power' is both moral authority and dynamic or supernatural energy or giftedness to fulfil our commission as witnesses. The holiness movement would be inclined to emphasise moral change while Charismatic movements emphasise spiritual giftedness. However, these emphases are not mutually exclusive.

The four NT passages by which charismatic Christians interpret their experience are:

Acts 2 Pentecost

Acts 8: 14-17 Samaria

Acts 9 The three-day gap between Saul's conversion and
receiving the Holy Spirit

Acts 19: 1-7 Ephesus

Charismatic teaching on tongues is based on Acts 2 and Acts 19 plus the story of Cornelius in Acts 10.

What do we understand by the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Early Christian Missioners and Salvationists used the term to describe an infilling of the Holy Spirit which could be repeated, a renewable experience. From about 1900 the expression was used less frequently in Army circles, possibly reflecting the rise of Pentecostalism.

The charismatic Christian would have no problem with the idea either of an infilling, or with the renewable experience, but it would begin with an instantaneous receiving of a new and heightened awareness of God, an outpouring of great joy, and receiving gifts of the Spirit - particularly the witness of the gift of tongues as a 'release' from the limitations of human language.

The emphasis on gifts (*charismata*) explains the term 'charismatic'; particular emphasis is placed early on the gifts of tongues, healing and prophecy. Perhaps the main difference between the holiness movement and

Pentecostalism is most clearly seen by comparing what

Harold Horton has to say about baptism and love, with what Brengle has to say.

Horton says:

'The evidence of water baptism at Jerusalem, Caesarea, Ephesus, was not faith nor love, but wetness! It is the same today. The evidence of baptism in the Spirit at Jerusalem, Caesarea, Ephesus, was not faith nor love, but tongues! So it is today... I want to know what degree of love will warrant a poor sinner saved by grace, the claim that he has received the baptism.'

Brengle says:

'Do you want to know what holiness is? It is pure love. Do you want to know what the baptism of the Holy Ghost is? It is not mere sentiment. It is not a happy sensation that passes away in a night. It is a baptism of love that brings every thought into captivity to the Lord Jesus (2 Corinthians 10:5); that casts out all fear (1 John 4:18)...that brings one into perfect and unbroken sympathy with the Lord Jesus Christ in his toil and travail to bring a lost and rebel world back to God.'

Helps to Holiness (1897)

In many congregations there has been an increased interest in personal holiness.

I myself had been a light smoker until I received the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. At that point I found it a physical impossibility to smoke! We did not find it necessary to make an issue about it. One by one, people who had received the Holy Spirit would stop smoking - without being told to, until it became rare to see anyone smoke in our fellowship. This has puzzled me a bit. Clearly, many who stopped smoking had far worse habits and problems that needed dealing with; over-eating, and other over-indulgences of various kinds, to say nothing of gossip, lack of honesty, conceit, and all other sins fallen mankind is heir to!

The best explanation I can offer is that such things as over- indulgence in smoking, or drinking, bad language, etc., are the outward symptoms of deeper problems. Being outward, they can be dealt with outwardly. It takes much longer to change the inclinations of the heart. It is important that these outward patterns be changed, but it is important not to make the mistake of thinking, as many do, that a change in these outward habits means 'holiness'. Holiness is a matter of the heart.

Nine O'clock in the Morning (Dennis Bennett)

Objections to the Charismatic Movement

For much of the 20th century there were four main objections to the claims of the charismatic renewal movement:

- i The Doctrine of Reception of the Holy Spirit.
- ii The Impact of Charismatic Thinking on Mainstream Doctrine.
- iii The Question of Emotionalism and Hysteria
- iv The Effect on Church Stability

The Bible teaches that we receive the Holy Spirit at conversion, and nowhere does it explicitly state that the Spirit is given through a second experience or that tongues are necessary evidence. On the contrary, Scripture states that reception of the Holy Spirit is a key element in conversion.

Jesus himself emphasises the essential role of the Spirit in new birth:

No one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit...You must be born again...The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.

John 3: 5-8

From this birth there is growth in the life of the believer. The fruit of the Spirit displays the evidence.

If there is a distinction to be made, according to some charismatic thinking, it is between 'receiving Christ' and 'receiving the Spirit'. There may also be differences of understanding in relation to the word 'power.'

Charismatic renewal and the Army

In the Army's most recent statement on Baptism the emphasis is on the scriptural truth that 'all who are in Christ are baptised into the one body by the Holy Spirit' (1 Corinthians 12:13). Being 'in Christ' means that we have the Spirit. He indwells us. He supports and guides us. He is with us, in us.

The statement also asserts that there is one baptism (Ephesians 4:5,6).

In *Living and Walking in the Spirit* (1975) General Clarence Wiseman said:

*The New Testament does not teach that Christians need a **new** baptism in the Spirit, for they already possess the Holy Spirit, otherwise they would not be Christians. What is required is an awakening to the necessity for an utter and complete surrender to the Spirit.*

As with other denominations in the UK, some Salvation Army congregations came to life through charismatic renewal. Some found fresh purpose and relevant ministry. New corps have been planted. Others were split because of clumsy attempts to impose charismatic worship-forms, thus alienating traditional and 'middle of the road' Salvationists. (The Army is particularly prone to this problem because it has no liturgical or sacramental forms at the centre of corps worship.) Charismatic style worship is, in most mainstream Churches, complementary to traditional worship.

The aim of a mutually-enriching balance of expressions of worship has come about almost by default in many parts of the world; firstly through the Army's embrace of the essentially charismatic ecclesiology of the Church Growth movement; more recently by the steady spread of 'fourth wave' homogeneity. Some Salvationists struggle with this, but many more have embraced the gentle process whereby the changes have come about.

A key to mutual understanding

Perhaps the most striking thing Salvationists have in common with the various renewal movements is language. The significant words used in each wave of renewal are an echo of Brengle and the other great holiness teachers. The message is about the release of power, liberty in the Spirit, an outpouring of joy, personal blessing from God, the assurance that we are God's children now and most of all – the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. As John Larsson suggests in *Spiritual Breakthrough*, holiness teaching and charismatic insights may simply be windows into the same truth.