

# Charismatic Movement

Uxbridge Road Tabernacle is not charismatic and does not have any links with charismatic churches.

## What is the Charismatic Movement?

In the late 1960's church life within the denominations was at a low ebb. The young people were being lost to the growing youth culture and due to bad teaching and liberal theology, no one seemed to know how to 'revive' the church. Then the Charismatic Movement hit the U.K. with its offer of power, miraculous gifts and renewed spiritual life and one after another Christians fell under its spell. Soon there were charismatics in churches in every denomination from Catholic to Methodists and some churches within a denomination were wholly charismatic. Later Charismatics started their own churches and expected a world-wide restoration of the church, based on charismatic values and gifts. Because of its emphasis on experience over all else charismatic churches and groups have been led into many excesses. They welcome and worship with those of Roman Catholic and liberal theology, practice some things which have only before been associated with cults, and have adopted the methodology of the world in their witness, worship and work.

## Is it a work of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God. Mtt. 28. And as God, He is sovereign in all His works. Jn.3. Now if the Charismatic Movement were a work of the Holy Spirit we would expect it to be a spontaneous work much like His coming on the church at Pentecost. But the beginnings of the Charismatic Movement were far from spontaneous. It started in the U.K. when a group of highly motivated and well financed Pentecostals who had formed themselves into the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship targeted prominent church leaders. They invited them to meals and enthused them with their teachings using 'the most polished of public relations techniques' to win them. Then they sent them back into their churches to enthuse their congregations and teach their members how to 'speak in tongues'.

Far from being a spontaneous work of the Holy Spirit, the Charismatic Movement is a product of men, imported into the U.K. from U.S.A. Pentecostalism.

## The Charismatic Movement and the Scriptures

Because the Charismatic Movement places so much emphasis on the experience of believers it tends to sideline the authority of the Scriptures. Experience becomes their rule and authority of whether something is of God or not. This has led to many excesses i.e. practising Catholics being accepted as Christians because they speak in tongues.

God is very clear that the Bible must be our rule and authority in all things. It is His Word. Ps 119v.160, Jn 17v.17. To deny or ignore its teaching or to accept anything which does not conform to its teaching is

to err. Gal. 1v.10, Mtt 22v.29. It alone is the Word of God finished and complete and all gifts of prophecy, words of knowledge and revelation have ceased with its completion. Eph 2v19-20. We are being built upon the foundation that the Apostles and prophets have laid, not laying new foundations or adding to the foundation. Rev22v.18-19 warns us not to add to the Scriptures. It is the Bible that we must turn to and examine all by.

## **The Charismatic Movement and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.**

For the Charismatics the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the initial blessing they seek to have before they can 'receive' the miraculous gifts. The Bible teaches that far from being a 2nd experience, that some Christians have which allows them to receive the gifts, the Baptism of the Spirit is something that all Christians have when they are born again and are joined to Christ. Rom 6v.1-4, 1Cor 12v.12-14, Gal 3v.26-29. This is that one baptism which Paul speaks of in Eph 4v.5. Water baptism is our declaration that this has happened to us. The baptism of the Spirit as a second experience creates haves and have nots which is the opposite of what the Spirit creates. Gal 3v.28.

## **The Charismatic Movement and the Miraculous Gifts**

The miraculous gifts are given for a specific purpose. They were referred to as signs and were used to authenticate and verify that the Apostle or prophet was of God. Jesus ministry was authenticated in this way. Jn 20v.30-31. The same applies to the Apostles and their foundational ministry. Heb 2v.1-4, Acts 5v.12, 2Cor 12v.11-12, Mk 16v.17-18.

These gifts were not meant to last beyond the foundation of the church and the completion of the Bible. 1Cor 13. They did not last long and began to cease during the life of the Apostles. They are not mentioned in the later letters. It also appears that later on in his ministry neither Paul nor anyone else in the church had the gift of healing. 2 Tim4v.20. And Prophecy was sealed up forever when John wrote the last Prophecy of the Scriptures. Rev 22v.18-19.

Are the 'gifts' exhibited by the Charismatic Movement the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in 1Cor.12? When we examine these gifts in the light of Scripture, we find that there are major discrepancies between what the Scripture teaches and what the Charismatics practice.

## **Tongues Speaking**

The tongues of the Scriptures were always known languages, which at the time the recipient of the gift did not know, but was given the ability to speak and preach fluently and understand instantaneously. Acts 2. They were given as a sign to unbelieving Jews. 1Cor. 14v.20-22.

Some think that what they are speaking is tongues of angels mentioned in 1 Cor.13v.1. But Paul is not saying that he does speak with tongues of angels but he is taking each point to an extreme, which is impossible. Also, whenever angels speak they speak in a known language that can be understood by those who receive the message the angels are sent with.

## Healing

In addition to the points that we have already made about healing, the healings of the Bible were instant, complete and verifiable. Those who had never seen, in a moment could see perfectly; others with withered muscles and deformed limbs could walk and leap. This is in stark contrast to what we see today. By the time James wrote his epistle it is clear that healing was by then a matter of prayer for the church and no longer in the hands of miracle workers. James 5v.13-18.

## Prophecy and Words of Knowledge

As already stated these gifts were for the period in which the Scriptures were being completed. It should be borne in mind by all who think they have these gifts that God warns that prophets must be entirely accurate and without error. Deut. 18v.20-22.

We are told to expect the cessation of the miraculous gifts in 1Cor.13v.8-13. History confirms that they had ceased by the time Christ's last Apostle, John, had died. Since that time they have not been known except in the claims of strange cults and the Roman Catholic church.

The great men of the early church who continued to build the church on the foundation laid by the Apostles and the prophets did not have these gifts; nor did the Reformers who gave their lives in rebuilding His church also on the foundation of the Apostles and the prophets.

Since the introduction of the Charismatic Movement in the 1960's what good has it done? It has split churches and created the haves and have nots so condemned in the Scriptures. It has not brought about a revival of religion with church attendance being at its lowest ebb. It has encouraged unbiblical excesses and worldliness in worship, like the Toronto Blessing.

If they have the gift of healing why aren't the hospital wards empty? If they can speak in tongues why can't anyone understand them or translate what they say? If they can prophecy why aren't they saying anything worth listening to and why aren't their prophecies coming true?

The need for today is not charismatic gifts but for reverence for God and a love and respect for His Word; for godly lives and true discipleship; for the preaching of the Gospel of Christ which is the power of God to salvation. Rom.1v.16. If we return to God, who knows, but He may in His sovereign mercy, look upon us again and bless us.