



## Aldersgate Renewal Ministries established 1977

### **GUIDELINES THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT**

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#### **INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

Since its beginning in the early 1960s, the ecumenical charismatic renewal has exerted a continuing influence upon mainline Christian bodies, both Protestant and Roman Catholic. Recent studies by George Gallup indicate approximately 18 percent of United Methodists identify with the movement.

At the 1972 session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference brought a petition asking that a position statement be prepared on the posture of The United Methodist Church toward the charismatic movement.

A General Board of Discipleship task force consisting of Don Cottrill, director of services, Youth Ministry Coordinators; T. Poe Williams, assistant general secretary, Local Church Education Training Enterprises; Maxie Dunnam, editor, *The Upper Room*; Horace Weaver, executive editor, Adult Publications; and Ross E. Whetstone, assistant general secretary for Evangelism admitted the "Guidelines" for consideration by the Board of Discipleship and the General

Conference. The task force felt that this position statement should be couched in the context of the theological pluralism which characterizes The United Methodist Church; the current culturally conditioned demands for experiential Christianity, insofar as we respond to them with integrity; and the doctrinal statements, the General Rules and Doctrinal Guidelines as set forth in Paras. 68-70 of the 1972 *Discipline*.

The "Guidelines" portion of this paper was approved by action of the 1976 General Conference. The paper, "The Charismatic Movement: Its Historical Base and Wesleyan Framework," derived by the Executive Committee of the Division of Evangelism, Worship, and Stewardship and the editors from a paper by Dr. Robert G. Tuttle, is a separate piece not considered to be official in nature but "commended to the church for study as background to the 'Guidelines.'"

## GLOSSARY

Terminology associated with the charismatic movement is confusing because of varying usage.

*Pentecostal* refers to the movement which began late in the nineteenth century, resulting in the formation of a number of Pentecostal denominations in the early years of the twentieth century. Classic Pentecostalism affirms what is sometimes spoken of as initial evidence, which includes the concept of a requisite "baptism in the Holy Spirit" that may be expressed by glossolalia or speaking in tongues. The inference that one who does not speak in tongues is guilty of withholding a full surrender of self to the will and purpose of God can be divisive among United Methodists.

*Charismatic*. While in popular usage the term *charismatic* is often closely associated with *glossolalia*; or speaking in tongues, most persons within the charismatic movement recognize the importance of all the "gifts of the Spirit," affirming that "to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor. 12:7). Many elevate the gifts of prophecy, healing, tongues, and interpretation of tongues because of a conviction that these gifts have been neglected by

the church and should be reaffirmed.

*Charismatic Movement.* Throughout this report the term charismatic movement is used to identify the movement which began about 1960 in mainline Christian bodies, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, reemphasizing the importance of the gifts of the Spirit in the life of the church.

In a biblical sense there is no such person as a "noncharismatic Christian," since the term *charismata* refers to the gracious gifts of God bestowed upon all Christians to equip them for ministry. The terminology above is used throughout this paper as a concession to popular usage.

## GUIDELINES

We believe the church needs to pray for a sensitivity to be aware of and respond to manifestations of the Holy Spirit in our world today. We are not unmindful that the problems of discrimination between the true and the fraudulent are considerable, but we must not allow the problems to paralyze our awareness of the Spirit's presence; nor should we permit our fear of the unknown and the unfamiliar to close our minds against being surprised by grace. We know the misuse of mystical experience is an ever-present possibility, but that is no reason to preclude authentic and appropriate relationships with the Spirit.

In facing the issues raised by charismatic experiences, we plead for a spirit of openness and love. We commend to the attention of the church the affirmations of First Corinthians 13, as well as the 1972 *Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, Para. 70: "United Methodists can heartily endorse the classical ecumenical watchword: 'In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and, in all things, charity (love that cares and understands).'" Without an active, calm, objective, and loving understanding of the religious experience of others, however different from one's own, reconciliation is impossible.

The criteria by which we judge the validity of another's religious experience must include its compatibility with the mind and the spirit

of our Lord Jesus Christ, as revealed in the New Testament. If the consequence and quality of a reported encounter with the Holy Spirit be manifestly conducive to division, self-righteousness, hostility, and exaggerated claims of knowledge and power, then the experience is subject to serious question. However, when the experience clearly results in new dimensions of faith, joy, and blessings to others, we must conclude that this is "what the Lord hath done" and offer him our praise.

### **Guidelines for All**

1. Be open and accepting of those whose Christian experiences differ from your own.
2. Continually undergird and envelop all discussions, conferences, meetings, and persons in prayer.
3. Be open to new ways in which God by his Spirit may be speaking to the church.
4. Seek the gifts of the Spirit which enrich your life and you for ministry.
5. Recognize that, even though spiritual gifts may be abused, this does not mean that they should be prohibited.
6. Remember that, like other new movements in church history, the charismatic renewal has a valid contribution to make to the ecumenical church.

### **For Pastors Who Have Had Charismatic Experiences**

1. Combine with your charismatic experience a thorough knowledge of, and adherence to, United Methodist polity and tradition. Remember your influence will, in large part, be earned by your loving and disciplined use of the gifts, by your conduct as a pastor to all your congregation, as well as by your participation as a responsible pastor.
2. Seek a deepening and continued friendship with your clergy

colleagues within and without the charismatic experience.

3. Remember your ordination vows, particularly the vow to "maintain and set forward, as much as lieth in you, quietness, peace, and love among all Christian people, and especially among those that shall be committed to your charge." Also, to "reverently heed them to whom the charge over you is committed, following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions." <sup>1</sup>

4. Avoid the temptation to force your personal views and experiences on others. Seek to understand those whose spiritual experiences differ from your own.

5. Seek to grow in your skills as a biblical exegete, a systematic theologian, and a preacher in *all* the fullness of the gospel (Para. 304, *The Book of Discipline, 1972*).

6. Pray for the gifts of the Spirit essential for your ministry; continually examine your life for the fruits of the Spirit.

7. Find significant expressions of your personal experience through ministries of social witness.

### **For Pastors Who Have Not Had Charismatic Experiences**

1. Continually examine your understanding of the doctrine and experience of the Holy Spirit so you can communicate this with clarity.

2. Remember the lessons of church history when God's people rediscover old truths: that the process is often disquieting, that it usually involves upheaval, change, and a degree of suffering and misunderstanding.

3. Seek firsthand knowledge of what the charismatic renewal means to those who have experienced it. Keep your judgments open until this firsthand knowledge is obtained (i.e., by attending and understanding their prayer meetings, etc.). Then observe and respond as a Christian, a United Methodist minister, and as a sympathetic, conscientious pastor.

Keep an openness to scriptural teaching regarding the charismatic gifts.

4. When speaking in tongues occurs, seek to know what it means to the speaker in his or her private devotional life and what it means when used for intercessory prayer, especially in group worship. We should be aware that speaking in tongues is considered a minor "gift of the Spirit" by many who have charismatic experiences.

5. Seek to know the meaning of the other "gifts of the Spirit" in the charismatic experience, such as the utterance of wisdom, knowledge, the gift of faith, healing, miracles, or prophesying.

6. United Methodist pastors should be intentional about the benefits to be derived by a mutual sharing of a variety of experiences which have biblical support. Accordingly, the pastor should seek to keep all meetings called for prayer and fellowship open to all interested members of the congregation.

### **For Laity Who Have Had Charismatic Experiences**

1. Remember to combine with your enthusiasm a thorough knowledge of an adherence to the United Methodist form of church government. The charismatic movement is closely related to the holiness movement, which is a part of our tradition. Consult with your pastor (or pastors) and if he or she has not also had your experience, help him or her to understand what it means to you. Invite your pastor to attend your group meetings.

2. Pray that the Spirit will help you understand, and that he may help you to maintain empathy with your colleagues and all your fellow United Methodists.

3. Strive for a scholarly knowledge of scriptural content in combination with your spiritual experiences. "Seek to unite knowledge and vital piety" (Wesley). Strive to integrate your experiences with the theological traditions of our church.

4. Avoid undisciplined undiplomatic enthusiasm in your eagerness to

share your experiences with others. Resist the temptation to pose as an authority on spiritual experiences. Failure in this area often causes your fellow United Methodists to accuse you of spiritual pride.

5. Keep your prayer meetings and other gatherings open to all members of your congregation. When noncharismatics do attend, discuss with them the purpose of the meeting with an interpretation of the significance of the content.

6. Remember that there are many types of Christian experiences which lead to spiritual growth; charismatic experience is *one* of these.

7. Accept opportunities to become personally involved in the work and mission of your own congregation. Let the results of your charismatic experience be seen in the outstanding quality of your church membership. Be an obvious enthusiastic supporter of your congregation, its pastor and lay leadership; of your district, your Annual Conference, the General Conference, and mission of each. This may well be the most effective witness you can offer to the validity and vitality of your charismatic experience. Strive to integrate your experience with the theological traditions of our church.

8. It is not necessary to embrace all the usual physical and verbal expressions of Pentecostalism. These singular expressions may at times be a barrier to your witness.

9. Keep your charismatic experience in perspective. No doubt it has caused you to feel that you are a better Christian. Remember that this does not mean you are better than other Christians, but that you are, perhaps, a better Christian than you were before.

### **For Laity Who Have Not Had Charismatic Experiences**

1. In our Western tradition, we believe God is constantly seeking to renew his church, including The United Methodist Church. Pray that God may make known to your own place in the process of renewal. The advent of the charismatic movement into our denomination is only one aspect of renewal.

2. Should some fellow members of your congregation have charismatic experiences, accept them as Christians. Should it edify, thank God.
3. Be aware of the tendency to separate ourselves from those who have experiences which differ from our own. Observe personally the charismatics in their prayer meetings, in your congregation, and in the mission of your church. Examine scriptural teaching about this. Pray about it. Discuss your concern with your pastor. The United Methodist Church is theologically pluralistic.
4. Do not be disturbed if your experience is different from others. This does not mean that you are an inferior Christian. Your function in the work and mission of your congregation calls for many gifts (1 Cor. 12-14). Each Christian is a unique member of the body of Christ.
5. Should your pastor be a charismatic, help her or him to be mindful of the spiritual needs of *all* the congregation, to be a pastor and teacher to all, and encourage her or him in preaching to present the wholeness of all aspects of the gospel.

### **For Connectional Administration**

1. Refer prayerfully and thoughtfully to the other sections of these Guidelines.
2. Remember your pastoral responsibilities toward ordained persons and congregations within the connection, particularly toward those whose spiritual experience may involve charismatic gifts.
3. Each administrator should consider whether any teaching or practice regarding the charismatic movement involving an ordained minister of a congregation is for the edification of the church.
4. If there is divisiveness involved in a particular situation, make as careful an evaluation as possible, remembering that there are other kinds of issues which may divide our fellowship. Sometimes tensions and conflicts may result in the edification and greater purity of the church and need, therefore, to be handled wisely and prayerfully by all

concerned.

5. Administrators and connectional bodies will be required to deal with expressions of the charismatic movement. We urge all involved to seek firsthand evidence about the movement, its meaning for those involved in it, and its value for the mission of the particular congregation.

6. Where an ordained person seems to overemphasize some charismatic doctrines/practices, she or he should be counseled to preach the wholeness of the gospel, to minister to the needs of all the congregation, and as a pastor to grow in understanding of our polity in the mission of the particular Annual Conference.

7. Annual Conferences may also be faced with a situation where there is a charismatic group within a congregation whose pastor, or whose lay leadership, or both, may be hostile to or ignorant of the charismatic movement. The Annual Conference Board of the Ministry, the bishop, and the district superintendent have a pastoral responsibility to mediate and to guide in reconciliation.

8. Pray continuously for sensitivity to the will of, and the leading of, the Holy Spirit.

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## **THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT ITS HISTORICAL BASE AND WESLEYAN FRAMEWORK**

Within the last quarter of the twentieth century we have witnessed a unitarian emphasis on the fatherhood of God, a radical evangelical faith in the person of Jesus Christ, and the charismatic expression of the Holy Spirit. Charismatic gifts and experiences, however, are not new to the church. History has revealed certain manifestations of the gifts and experiences of the Spirit, in every century since Pentecost.

In our own time, the work of the Holy Spirit is apparent. Increasingly,

United Methodists are holding healing services, participating in prayer and praise groups, and attending Holy Spirit conferences across the country. Interest is high, with testimonies coming from bishops, lay persons, district superintendents, seminary professors, and local pastors. Yet many United Methodist charismatics feel isolated and misunderstood: many noncharismatics feel threatened and/or alienated and hostile. If we can gain perspective from our Wesleyan heritage—a significant contribution to the charismatic movement—reconciliation can take place.

Azusa Street, where American Pentecostalism was launched, is to this movement what Aldersgate is to Methodism. The Pentecostal doctrine of subsequence was derived from Wesley's teachings concerning the second blessing, or entire sanctification.

### **The Historical Base**

Methodism provides a highly important tradition for the student of charismatic origins. Wesley's theology of grace is in fact a theology, of the Holy Spirit. The terms grace and *Holy Spirit* are associated in all of Wesley's writings. Although Frederick Dale Bruner exaggerated a bit to insist that the Pentecostal/charismatic movements are "Primitive Methodism's extended incarnation,"<sup>2</sup> the fact remains that eighteenth century Methodism gave rise to the nineteenth century American holiness movement, which gave rise to the twentieth century Pentecostal/charismatic phenomena. It was the eighteenth century Methodist quest for an instantaneous experience of sanctification, or second work of grace (rightly or wrongly interpreted), that inspired the nineteenth century American holiness movement. Revivalists like Charles Finney (born in 1792, the year after Wesley's death) used Wesley's theological writings as grist for a holiness emphasis designed to "revive" religion in America. Although Finney's methodology was more significant than his theology upon the Pentecostal/charismatic movement, his popularization of the phrase "baptism of the Holy Ghost" had a close parallel to the Pentecostal emphasis arising out of Azusa Street.

There is some question whether Pentecostalism per se would have occurred had the holiness tradition retained its influence within the local church. By the turn of the twentieth century, however, the decline of Wesley's emphasis on perfection among Methodists, the development of theological views in response to changing cultural conditions, and the apparent wealth and worldliness of the church created considerable spiritual insecurity.

It was also a period of tremendous social change. The American scene was shifting rapidly from an agrarian to an industrial society. The move was from a rural to an urban-centered population, from a relatively homogeneous to a polygenetic people. Anticolonialism was giving way to imperialism, and the laissez-faire policy to the first stages of governmental social regulation. Those changes registered shock most severely, according to W. G. McLoughlin, on the "country-bred, evangelically oriented, intellectually unsophisticated and sentimentally insecure individuals who made up the bulk of the nation's churchgoers."<sup>3</sup>

Many, however, sensed the need to individualize and to create an excitement for the Christian faith in a depersonalized civilization. Pentecostalism, viewed by some as closely akin to a Methodist experiential *theology* and a revivalist experiential *methodology*, was to meet that need, at least in part., and to find response in an experience-hungry world.

Pentecostalism might never have severed itself from mainline denominations, and revivalism might have remained within the established churches, had not many Christians overreacted. The social gospel, born out of revivalism, aligned itself with a more liberal tradition which saw the necessity of stamping out anything that was suggestive of the priest and Levite bypassing suffering humanity. The church became polarized in response to the Pentecostal emphasis. The Pentecostal doctrine, which insists on speaking in tongues as initial evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit, remains divisive to the present time.

Pentecostal beginnings were spontaneous, scattered, and little noticed. As early as 1896 some revivalists reported experiences of glossolalia in North Carolina. It was not until 1900, however, that any significance was attached to this experience. Charles F. Parham, a young Methodist minister frustrated by the sterility of his own ministry in contrast with the power of the apostles, started the Bethel Bible College at Topeka, Kansas. Parham and his students quickly identified Wesley's doctrine of subsequent instantaneous sanctification with Finney's "baptism of the Holy Spirit" and concluded that it should be sought with the evidence of tongues. Parham then opened a second school in Houston, Texas. Among those who came seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit was W. J. Seymour, a black minister from Los Angeles. After several months of study and prayer he returned to Los Angeles where a revival broke out during a mission at a former Methodist chapel at 312 Azusa Street. That revival lasted three years and the American Pentecostal movement was "officially" launched.

About twenty-five years ago pastors and lay persons within mainline denominations began to confess experiencing various gifts of the Spirit more openly. Rather than leaving for Pentecostal congregations, they chose to remain within their established churches. Thus, the charismatic movement began when individuals across denominational lines—Protestant and Roman Catholic—realized that they shared common experiences. While continuing to support their local churches, they began meeting to discuss those experiences openly.

There are several areas where charismatics identify with their Pentecostal cousins—the emphasis on religious experiences beyond conversion with an openness to spiritual gifts, for example. But *there are significant differences as well*. Pentecostals organize their converts into separate churches; charismatics do not. Charismatics encourage their number to remain within their local churches. Pentecostals have a fairly well-defined theological system. They maintain, for instance, that subsequent to justification there is an instantaneous sanctification experience known as the baptism of the Holy Spirit which *must be* confirmed by speaking in tongues. Charismatics do not. Although charismatics are open to all spiritual gifts and experiences subsequent

to conversion, they try not to isolate those gifts and experiences as marks of spirituality. They choose, rather, to interpret them in the light of their own traditions. John Wesley writes:

In [Acts IV] we read, that when the Apostles and brethren had been praying, and praising God, "the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Not that we find any visible appearance here, such as had been in the former instance: nor are we informed that the extraordinary *gifts* of the Holy Ghost were then given to all or any of them, such as the gifts of "healing, of working" other miracles, of prophecy, of discerning spirits, the speaking with divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. (1 Cor. xii. 9, 10).

Whether these gifts of the Holy Ghost were designed to remain in the Church throughout all ages, and whether or not they will be restored at the nearer approach of the "restitution of all things," are questions which it is not needful to decide. But it is needful to observe this, that even in the infancy of the Church, God divided them with a sparing hand. Were all even then prophets? Were all workers of miracles? Had all the gifts of healing? Did all speak with tongues? No, in no wise. Perhaps not one in a thousand. Probably none but the teachers in the Church, and only some of them (1 Cor. xii. 28-30). It was, therefore, for a more excellent purpose than this, that "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

It was, to give them (what none can deny to be essential to all Christians in all ages) the mind which was in Christ, those holy fruits of the Spirit, which whosoever hath not, is none of His; to fill them with "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness" (Gal. v. 22-24); to endue them with faith (perhaps it might be rendered *fidelity*), with meekness and temperance; to enable them to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts, its passions and desires, and in consequence of that inward change, to fulfill all outward

righteousness: to "walk as Christ also walked," in "the work of faith, in the patience of hope, the labour of love" (1 Thess. i. 3).

John Wesley, *Sermons*: "Scriptural Christianity,"

Introduction, 2-4 (S, 1, 92-94)

It is in a failure to see the importance of this that some charismatics get into trouble. Ideally, Presbyterian charismatics, for example, interpret their gifts and experiences in light of the sovereignty of God, Roman Catholic charismatics in light of their sacramental theology, and United Methodists in light of John Wesley's theology of grace. Problems arise when charismatics, knowingly or unknowingly, attempt to adopt a more classical Pentecostal line in conflict with their own tradition, and division occurs. Equally devastating is the circumstance in which some charismatics adopt no line at all and become floaters vulnerable to exploitation. They substitute experience for doctrine and are no longer rooted in the traditions that could sustain them.

Our task, therefore, is to provide United Methodists with a clear understanding of our heritage—a heritage that will enable them to interpret charismatic gifts and experiences in a way that is healthy and sound.

### **A Wesleyan Framework**

Charismatics interpret their gifts and experiences in light of their own traditions. When this does not occur, division and/or exploitation sets in. When United Methodist charismatics adopt a classical Pentecostal line, they are no longer United Methodists—at least in the Wesleyan sense. John Wesley said:

"The gift of tongues may," you say, "be considered as a proper test or criterion for determining the miraculous pretensions of all Churches. If among their extraordinary gifts they cannot show us this, they have none to show which are genuine."

Now, I really thought it had been otherwise. I thought it had been an adjudged rule in the case, "All these worketh one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man, severally as he will;" and as to every man, so to every Church, every collective body of men. But if this be so, then yours is no proper test for determining the pretensions of all Churches; seeing He who worketh as He will, may, with your good leave, give the gift of tongues, where He gives no other; and may see abundant reasons so to do, whether you and I see them or not. For perhaps we have not always known the mind of the Lord; not being of the number of his counsellors. On the other hand, he may see good to give many other gifts, where it is not his will to bestow this. Particularly where it would be of no use; as in a Church where all are of one mind, and all speak the same language.

*The Works of John Wesley, Vol. X, p. 56*

Charismatics must be brought gently to an awareness of the inherent possibility of division. When United Methodist charismatics have no theological base—a disease common not only among charismatics—they need to know that, properly understood within the context of our own tradition, their charismatic gifts and experiences will be considered as fresh wind in a church that still has more trouble with ice than with fire. John Wesley's theology of grace, properly understood, can ground charismatic United Methodists in a tradition that can give direction to their enthusiasm. Let us, therefore, reexamine Wesley's theology of grace in light of the charismatic gifts and experiences.

Wesley's theology of grace is in fact a theology of the Holy Spirit. He believed that Reformation theology was built upon the cardinal doctrine of original sin and that it is God's sovereign will to reverse our "sinful, devilish nature" by the work of his Holy Spirit. He called this prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace.

Bound by sin and death, one experiences almost from the moment of conception the gentle wooing of the Holy Spirit—*prevenient grace*. This grace "prevents" one from wandering so far from the Way that

when a person finally understands what it means to be justified, the Holy Spirit prompts one's freedom to say yes. For Wesley, this yes was a heartfelt faith in the merit of Christ alone for salvation. It allows the Holy Spirit to take the righteousness that was in Christ and attribute or impute it to the believer—*justifying grace*. For Wesley this begins a *lifelong movement* from imputed to imparted righteousness in which the Holy Spirit moves the believer from the righteousness of Christ attributed through faith to the righteousness of Christ realized within the individual—*sanctifying grace*.

Most students of Wesley are keenly aware of the emphasis he placed upon sanctification. It is precisely at this point, however, that we must not make the same mistake made by classical Pentecostals, namely that of isolating sanctification as one other experience beyond conversion. Harald Lindstrom writes in *Wesley and Sanctification* that investigation of Wesley's concept of salvation has been concentrated too often on the new birth and complete sanctification (Christian perfection) as "two isolated phenomena unconnected organically with this doctrine of salvation as a whole."<sup>4</sup> Since both of these events in Wesley's thought may be instantaneous, the gradual process of general sanctification is often minimized. Yet Wesley's emphasis upon the gradual process is obvious, for, though "entire sanctification" is a possibility and goal for all believers, by far the greater number of Christian believers will always be involved in the process. Admittedly, Wesley was a bit unguarded at times when referring to sanctification as an instantaneous experience subsequent to justification. If he were writing today, he would probably place even more emphasis on sanctification as a gradual work of grace characterized by many experiences that keep conversion contemporary.

To understand Wesley's experience of "entire sanctification" is to know how far the Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Spirit falls short, if there are not continuing works of grace. Grace is continual, though it may be perceived episodically. In our study of the charismatic movement it is essential that we do not confuse being "filled with the Holy Spirit" with Wesley's mature doctrine of sanctification. The Spirit-filled life is, rather, a sustained line of gifts, experiences, and

divine support, beginning with conversion, constantly moving us toward that goal.

Many charismatics have come to believe that being filled with the Holy Spirit is an experience which begins with justification and continues as a lifelong motivating experience for the believer. For the charismatic, Spirit-baptism is not one but many gifts, not two but many experiences, intended to sustain one day after day. The relevance of Wesley's doctrine can be demonstrated by his statement: "The only way to keep Methodists alive is to keep them moving." Wesley took the expression *moi progressus ad infinitum*—my progress is without end—from Francois Fenelon, the seventeenth century theologian and mystic. Thus, United Methodist charismatics, within the context of their own rich tradition, can never interpret gifts and experiences as signs of superior spirituality making them better than others. Rather, the power of God being sustained within them makes them better than they were.

## **Conclusion**

Pentecostals have a predictable interpretation of the Wesleyan revival. Although Pentecostalism has its roots deeply imbedded within that tradition, it has little in common with Wesley's theology. Charismatics, on the other hand, have a point of reference for understanding their gifts and experiences in a way that is both guarded and open.

United Methodist charismatics and noncharismatics alike should be encouraged. There is no need for battlelines to be drawn. Albert Outler has stated that the charismatic movement might be the catalyst for a third great awakening. He concludes: "What if their charismatic renewal should prove more than a passing fad? Would they be our allies or rivals in our commitments to a church catholic, evangelical, and reformed: catholic in it; human outreach, evangelical in its spiritual upreach, reformed in its constant openness to change? If nothing comes of all this, put my comments about it down to a softening of the brain. But if something does come of it, don't say you weren't warned!"<sup>5</sup>

There are blind spots in all of us. Charismatics, for example, have a tendency to exalt a personal gospel: noncharismatics need to remember that the opposite of *personal* is not *social* but *impersonal*. The social dimension of the gospel does not bypass the personal; it harnesses it and rides it to the stars. It provides an opportunity for witness and service in the world. In fact, the term noncharismatic Christian is a misnomer. All Christians have gifts. *Charismatic*, as earlier defined, refers to those who more explicitly acknowledge and emphasize teachings concerning the power of the Holy Spirit at work within them through such gifts. Surely there are lessons to be learned as well as lessons to be taught, sometimes from mistakes and sometimes from successes. In the meantime, God help us all if we do not practice love and openness. After all, that is what the Spirit-filled life is really all about.

## NOTES

1. *The Book of Worship*, "The Order for the Ordination of Elders," p. 50.
2. Frederick Dale Bruner. *A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1970).
3. W.G. McLoughlin, Jr., *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1959), p. 468.
4. Harald Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification* (London: The Epworth Press, 1950), p. 105.
5. Albert Outler, *Evangelism in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Nashville: Tidings, 1971), p. 82.

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