

THE LAST WORD ON CHARISMATICS

(1) THE CONS OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

- John Sabel

L.S.F. discussions have always been one of the few places in church circles where it is possible to have a completely open enquiry on the understanding that what is being said is not necessarily a statement that goes with you for the rest of your life, but it can be part of an ongoing growth and education. In student circles anybody can make a statement in a tutorial, lecture, or discussion; they are contributing a thought that occurred to them at that particular time and are not expected to be bound by that, but will listen to the next thought that comes and adjust, if necessary or desirable, their own thinking. In academic circles there has been a long history of free and open discussion of whatever comes up: you say what you think! I'm used to that, and that's what I think it ought to be tonight in the brief time we've got. So we won't parade for some particular people or try to put up some show to win some argument, but we say what we think at the moment, and so discussion and thinking is generated and we get somewhere. I've been busy to 2.45 this morning marking about thirty papers for Adelaide C.A.E. on the subject of ethics; a section of them were on the question of whether a believing and practicing Christian is necessarily a moral person. Some of these essays and papers showed a marked antagonism to Christianity for the one reason that Christians, according to these people, pressure them by their holiness and righteousness and make demands on them to be somebody, and the non-Christians object by saying: "you're not that good yourself, I'm as good as you are". Now I spent a lot of time last night writing in on margins and suggesting other things. I don't mind if people do this; in fact, I'm pleased if they do and I commended them for it because at least it opens up issues - if they say strongly what they feel at the time then someone else can come back and give some answers to it and the whole thing can progress, but if they shut up and say what they think their lecturer or someone else wants then there's no forward moving at all.

So what I want to do tonight is talk about problems which I have with the charismatic movement, to talk quite simply about things which have been worrying me and maybe other people over the past years. The fact is that there are still people around who are very disturbed about the Charismatic movement. There are many people who are alarmed and disturbed within their own Christian lives: they have been challenged in some way by the charismatic movement and feel that they ought to be different people from what they are, as Christians they feel guilty about their lack of spiritual expression or something like that. There are people who feel guilty in respect to themselves because they have seen tremendous enthusiasm and confidence in the lives of other people, and there are people who told me (not this year, but in previous times) they will not come to any more L.S.F. meetings because they are not good enough, not pious enough for this group. There are still people around who have fears about the charismatics and what it might mean theologically and pastorally in the church; there are still people around the place whose marriages are being split up because one party

has become a new person in terms of enthusiasm and spiritual expression and the like and the other party has not, and I know some very recently; there are still people around the place in the charismatic movement who give evidence of an anti-established-church spirit - I'm not talking about Lutheran circles necessarily, because I meet up with quite a few people elsewhere, including Roman Catholics here in Australia - and who are extremely anti-ordinary church life. Just on this last point: this disturbs me considerably and has been one of my big worries, apart from the other points I mentioned. I know the effect of this sort of thing on people, and I'm very jealous about the reputation of the ordinary church life because I believe that in the ordinariness and in times of scandal of the established church God works His miracles, and I've been witness to many of these in very simple and ordinary human terms during the years of my ministry. There has been a constant stream of people who I have confirmed, baptized, married, or buried - a hundred in my last parish, a hundred death beds, burial services, attending to all the bereaved people - and I know in these old established congregations where things have been going on for years and years the spirit works with tremendous power; I've seen this again and again to such a degree that at no time will I tolerate anybody who says it is dead, wrong, bad, old hat. Most of us were nourished by this ordinary church life, were given our faith, led into the Christian community by this type of church, and this very human thing will always be there to the end of time. And so it worries me when I begin to hear people saying that that is not the sort of church that should be. People within the community and who love the community have the right to say that and encourage one another, but not to stand outside as a movement or group and attack.

So these are the things that worry me, and I'm not particularly talking about Lutheran circles but anywhere that I've been. I now that movements with labels on them, like the charismatic movement, are very variable and are subject to all sorts of misrepresentations: you can make claims and comments, and people can say that that's not what they understand by "charismatics". I don't think you can avoid this problem: I acknowledge that sweeping statements can be made and they may not apply to this or that situation, but that's the way it goes. But I do think that any movement that has become as apparent and far-reaching as the charismatic movement has across the Western world, has to be available for critical assessment, and that's what I want to do in these few minutes tonight.

The God that I know and with whom I have lived since as long as I can remember is a God who is a very understanding person. He for instance is the One who is spoken of in the Old Testament as "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who led you out of Egypt, out of the land of bondage". This freedom and liberation thing comes from the beginning of the Old Testament history, and when you look at these words in the Hebrew language Abraham means the people of faith, Isaac means laughter, and Jacob means the crooked one, so that

really this great statement which comes through all the time is "I'm the God of the people of faith, of laughter, and of the crooked one" - this is the way I see God. We can go to the New Testament, and the Christ which I see and understand is One who came to ordinary, dejected, bewildered people, as on the Emmaus road, and sat with them in their average homes and ate with them, and whom they recognized in the breaking of bread; that very ordinary, basic, human friendship situation is the first account which Luke gives in detail of the resurrection of Christ, and the second account that he gives is also centered on a very basic situation, where they are eating grilled fish and give Jesus a piece which He eats in front of them. These people who have been frightened and completely bewildered recognize Him in this situation. Luke carried through in great lengths and insistence that you know Christ not in the ritual and the laws, the spiritual heights of the Pharisees, but He makes Himself known to you in the ordinary, common, everyday things of life. I suspect that in the charismatic movement there has been a desire to know God as a God of power, to know God in the heights of spiritual expression, to know God in the marvelous things, and not to know God primarily in the ordinary people, the poor people, the broken people, the simple people, in what we are and need day by day.

On three grounds I basically disapprove of or am anxious about the charismatic renewal movement: culturally, theologically, and pastorally.

(i) Cultural. It's the ninth or tenth year of my student chaplaincy here; I came in the time of those student protests and I followed the whole cultural movements of that time on the student scene. The "Jesus Movement" was an authentic expression of Christianity and I fostered it. People mightn't believe this (many people think I've gone square and establishment after those hey-day years) but I instrumented in all manner of expressions, which today would be very radical and belong to some other group, when the Jesus movement began here in Adelaide. But as time went by something was happening to this, it was no longer an authentic student movement and there were pressures coming from outside - theological and church pressures from the States, very well intentioned but not belonging to our scene here and therefore not necessarily to be adopted by us. The strong Calvinist/Baptist strains in the U.S.A. were reproduced here and took over the Jesus movement, and I think that the established Calvinist thinking absorbed so much that was fresh and authentic and refreshing in the Jesus movement. I don't think that the Jesus movement, as it developed and moved into the pentecostal movement, belonged to the normal expression of kids coming up from high school in our community; it was something that was being hoisted on them, not primarily for their own good (culturally-speaking) but because other people had vested interests. This sort of movement arises initially and primarily from uncertainty about the validity of the Christian faith over against other faiths that might be militant or other philosophies that might be having a good show of strength - that was the problem with Corinth, the great cauldron of intellectual ideas: the Christian people who were there were uncertain or shaken by the militancy of other

faiths and other philosophies, and right through church history there's this breeding ground for the type of theology that comes in the charismatic movement that we see today. I believe that this flourishes in cultural turmoil and that's why it has flourished so much in the U.S.A. in the past years, and has moved to other places that share the media image that's projected through from the States.

(ii) Theological. I think that the charismatic movement detracts from the actual Biblical thrust. I'm not talking about the sincerity or the genuineness of the people or the things that God can do, but about the thing that is projected as being Christian and therefore as being a requirement on other people. I'm terribly concerned about all the guys at the service station, my old Italian neighbour, and all my friends in the academic world who are agnostics and who are up to the neck with Christians who keep on saying "Jesus loves you, hallelujah!" and will not face the issues of the day sensibly and realistically. Recall what I mentioned about Luke's attitude to Jesus Christ: that He will be known in the simple, real, ordinary, human affairs of life; this whole business of the incarnation is that Christ (as distinct from all other religions) came down in poverty, to shepherds first of all, who were the outcasts of that culture; that in simplicity He died on the cross and they preached Christ crucified, which is the opposite of a beautiful, triumphal religious movement. It is just the opposite to what anybody would think religiously, and there'in lies its power, because when we are honest with ourselves we know that we are nothing religiously and it is in our nothingness that Christ meets us, accepts us, and moves forward with us. The whole sacramental thrust of Lutheran theology is so important, because only in using the ordinary common elements and sanctifying them in the sacraments (and all the elements of our lives and sanctifying them, making something out of them where apparently there is nothing) can Christianity have any meaning as far as I can see, because I have come to doubt every human expression of spirituality - knowing so many failures in myself and in other people I can see that only God is able to use and sanctify and redeem our brokenness, our nothingness. I believe the charismatic renewal movement largely across the whole board is individualistic rather than corporate, tends to thrust the emphasis on man's experience rather than God (despite what's being said).

(iii) Pastoral. I believe that the arrogance associated with spiritual upsurge in the human being is something to be dealt with pastorally; it's a problem for people, and it causes despair in others - I've seen that many times. I believe that people who try and put the Holy Spirit into a box and make Him a methodist - that He will work according to one method - have missed out on the whole wonder of the Spirit working throughout the world. I believe that the exclusiveness generated by this sort of thing is not what was wanted by Christ. I don't believe we have a mission to present the power of the Lord Jesus Christ through the Spirit in the world today, but I believe we have a mission to be servants and assistants of Christ, and that's the opposite of power. And I believe that many charismatics have become so legalistic that whether they actually say it out loud or not they are really condemning other people and feeling good about their own experience of spirituality

(2) THE PROS OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

- Doug Kuhl

I'd just like to preface our sharing time with a small section out of scripture which I think is quite relevant; I'm picking it up from something that John said earlier with regard to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, being a God Who leads us out of bondage - indeed this is what the prophet Isaiah declared in chapter 61, and it's this very theme that Jesus picks up at the beginning of his ministry; He carries it before Him and the early apostles carried it before them, too, as they moved forward. Quite decidedly in chapters 13-16 and then in the triumphal chapter 17 of the Gospel of John, Jesus very really says: "hey, my brothers, what you see me do now, you do; I wash your feet, take this as an example; I loved you with a love that's going to cost me my life, so you now take this as the commandment that you should love one another". And Jesus went on to say: "the world hates me, know that it's going to hate you, too; and as a matter of fact there is going to come a time, after which the Holy Spirit has come upon you, when those who chuck you into jail will think they're doing God a service". And so Jesus was saying to them: "see what happens to me, now you follow along, too" - Jesus began His ministry with those words, and you know the scene at Nazareth: He goes back to His home town and He's given the invitation to read the scriptures ("here comes the local boy back home again"), they hand him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and He unrolls it and this is what He reads: "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has chosen to bring good news to the poor, he has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives" - to all those who are held in some sort of captivity, be it inner captivity or whatever, he has come now to proclaim liberty, freedom, the recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed. I was once oppressed in my life (still am in many ways) but I know a Saviour who comes to redeem me in the midst of all that and who announced at the beginning of His ministry that the time had come when the Lord would save His people.

I was reading one little section of the recent statement made by the Commission on Theology of the Lutheran Church. The promotion of charismatic groups could be another reminder to the church as a whole at besetting weaknesses which may be found from time to time in our congregation: a lack of community life and rich spiritual fellowship, a cold profession of faith without the warmth of a glowing love, a lack of participation in worship and in the front line of the church's mission, a lack of sincere striving for personal sanctification and piety, in short a quenching of the Spirit. All Lutherans will surely agree that a church continually needs the renewing power of the Holy Spirit if it is to be the church that the Lord wants it to be.

"Last word on charismatics", I heard the evening was called. I hope not, and I hope it doesn't represent wishful thinking among a few of you, because I don't think it is going to be, somehow. Everything that I've seen around the world says most certainly tonight is not going to be the last word of

charismatics; you'll hear a lot of it because the movement is large and it is growing daily into something which I suppose is probably the largest single influence upon the Christian church in the twentieth century. What I'm implying by the statement is simply this: it sets no thinking (doesn't it) as to why. Why is this happening? Why are so many hundreds of thousands of people now within the Christian church in the Western world (and also in the third-world church) seeing this as the kind of thing which God is saying and doing within His church today? And why are there needs which bring people to this so-called movement? I have nothing against a movement: the Lutherans began as one, our reformation movement, and I see this as a reformation movement, too, I see it as the constant need of every generation to allow God to renew and reform His church according to the pattern which He himself has set and to the life which He Himself calls people. He is calling you and I to His life - not ours. It is the life of His Son He promises to give us, it is the life of His Son He offers us, and to my mind that's the true understanding of the incarnation. Sure, incorporate ordinariness, but understand the incarnation truly, for locked within ordinary events of God working right through history, from the time when He called Abraham right to this very day, has been hidden the mystery of that grain of need, that grain that Jesus talked about which must die so that it may bring forth a new life, a new growth, the dynamic of something new, something which the world cannot of itself produce. So to my mind it is the true understanding of the incarnation that He comes to us in ordinary means through word and sacrament, and also taking shape within us in ordinary actions of prayer to the Lord, of singing songs, of just sharing life with one another.

I differ with John that it is a very individualistic movement; it isn't. As a matter of fact it is a very corporate movement, vitally interested in community life, not for itself but for the whole body of Christ. A lot of what I read is concerned, and it's my concern and the concern of the members which form our community, that we join ourselves to the body of Christ, that we take our place within the body and we share and care and live responsibly the lives the Lord has called us to live together, and we learn some of that togetherness which of course is the very nature of the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are together forever. They are community forever, and They know what community life is all about because They have been at it since before time began.

This life, through the incarnation of the Son, Jesus now offers us. He offers to call us and to usher us in to the experience of the life of that eternal community, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, where we can share something of that togetherness - of course, sharing that not just with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit on an individual basis, but as you come into this community you will be empowered, released to love one another as He has loved you. That's how I see it.

I would also like to appeal to you not to react in an emotional way. Quite often (it's an incredible bit of irony) I've seen the charismatics held up as "that emotional bunch of people". We have come into this life as the Lord has led us, and I can only go on our own experience together: the Lord has caused us to come face to face with the reality of ourselves in the midst of one another, our weaknesses, our besetting sins, our failures, our relationships that have all gone wrong - be it with our wives and husbands, ~~be it with our wives and husbands~~, be it with one another, or whatever - we are constantly faced with the reality of that agony, and hang it all, that's not the way any of us really wants to live! We wished to goodness that there was victory in the midst of that. Well, there is, through Christ Jesus. The point of the matter is I don't believe the charismatic movement leads you into some kind of emotional "high", some emotional trip where you live in fantasyland; you're led to face the reality of your lives and your situation. Even if one can say the charismatics are emotional in their worship, of course they are: an emotion is part of our total being and God has come to save us including our emotions. Lutherans, I guess, are probably more guilty of this than anyone in that they wish to make of their Christianity a mere intellectual exercise, and I know all of you will agree with me on that; we kind of think that if we can intellectualize our way through our faith we've got it, and we cut out an involvement on a total life level. As I understand the New Testament the Lord wishes to lead us into an experience of His salvation and life together with the Son of God which involves our total lives, the full spectrum of all that's us, and hang it all, that's a pretty good salvation! - that's what excited me, that I can be involved in this with all that I am, even my ordinary, human, emotional responses, because (let's face it) my emotional responses to things are part of my ordinary human make-up. But maybe we try through intellectualizing our Christian faith ^{to cut} out our emotional responses, and we try somehow to make it above the ordinary by being an intellectual trip. Accusations and criticisms can go back and forward, but I ask you not to examine this on a mere emotional reaction - but examine it, please!

We must be aware of stereotypes on both sides of the fence. It's so easy for the charismatics (and I've done it) to stereotype a church as something that's dead and had it, something that God discarded many centuries ago, and quite often the charismatics have held up the church in that kind of way and sent it up according to that kind of stereotype. Well, that's wrong! At the same time the church has stereotyped the charismatics as being an over-emotional, ridiculous bunch of pentecostals and that stereotype is equally as wrong. We could go through all the stereotypes that we love to label each other with, but I don't think that is going to get anyone anywhere, and thus I just warn you you against such a thing.

What I wish to talk about is what I hope for my church, not just for charismatics and not just for my Lutheran church (at which I'm a pastor and a member), but for the church of Jesus, the body of Christ. My hope is that my church will be constantly renewed, and that means that people are renewed through the redeeming love of Christ Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit - that's what I understand the New Testament message to be all about; yes,

that God reaches down into our ordinariness. Hang it all, brothers and sisters, I don't really wish to blow my own trumpet, but I will say this much, that that's what I'm involved in every day of my life: reaching out to drug addicts and alcoholics and guys who've been blown apart emotionally, and somehow, together with my brothers and sisters, trying to speak the love of Jesus to all those pieces. We can't do it, only the Holy Spirit can do it (and that's pretty good Lutheran theology), and all we can do is just be instruments of the word. But as instruments of that word and that message to ordinary people who are blown apart by this world system, we do not belong to the cosmos of this world. Jesus does not call us to it, either; He calls us out of it, He places us in it as His redeeming agents, if you like, His ambassadors of life in the midst of it, but we are not of it and we can never be. If we are, then we have no message and what we mouth are mere formulae, phrases, and pious platitudes with no redemption taking place within us. As Bertrand Russell said, "I will believe in a redeemer when I see some redeemed", and so the sentence stands above our heads to allow Jesus, to allow the Holy Spirit to create some integrity within us in terms of our daily lives. Sure, we battle daily with sin, and we always will, but the point is I do not battle in despair, I do not battle along with no hope; I battle as one to whom hope has come, for Jesus is my hope and He has taken residence within me, granting me hope to enjoy victory in all my daily battles - praise God I experience that!

That's what the charismatic movement is all about, that kind of renewal of people, people who are hopeless. What am I going to say to a drug addict who's torn apart? "Well, brother, Jesus loves you", and repeat some pious platitude to the guy that "God accepts you as you are?" "What? He accepts me as I am, and leaves me in my bloody agony? What kind of God's this, anyhow?" But if I can speak a message of hope to him that in and through the power which is invested in Jesus' name God wishes to put you together again, like the Humpty Dumpty that fell off the wall and all the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put him together again; but Jesus can, and indeed, that's the meaning of the old nursery rhyme. And so there is power, but its powerful life invested in ordinary daily activity. How I relate to my wife, my children, my brothers and sisters around me, in all the ordinary circumstances: there God promises to meet me. Not in some high quasi-spiritual trip; no, sir! I agree with John on that, that's not where God promises to meet us, but rather in the ordinary circumstances of our daily living. However, I warn you that if you are open to the victory of Jesus in those ordinary circumstances what will happen to you is an experience of victory which will grant you to be released into joy at times. You'll come together and you'll just praise Him because there has been released into your life joy and love and all that goes with Christian victory.

What I personally have received within the charismatic movement is wisdom for my personal relationships of a kind that I never ever encountered before, a practical kind of wisdom that allows me and also motivates me to establish my personal relationships on a true basis, on Jesus and on His love, and also wisdom for my marriage and where it ought to lead, wisdom for my family and how I can grow them up in a world which doesn't believe in

family and marriage. I believe for myself that I have received practical wisdom of a nature which has totally revitalized my relationships in those areas and renewed them to a point that where once I despaired now I have hope - I really do. And also then for community: I despaired that our church would never know community; as far as I could see (to quote the words of Francis Schaeffer) our church was a mere organizational centre and a preaching point and nothing more, and existed in an impersonal, institutional type of structure - not that organization is necessarily bad, nor is the church as an institution bad in itself, but the lack of personal involvement and personal relationships that existed in there was bad. What I've personally got out of the charismatic movement is not only an understanding of the community I didn't have before, but also an experience of it which has just revolutionized my whole life and my whole thinking of the life of discipleship to which Jesus has called me.

God redeems our brokenness and failures. He comes and He meets us at the point of our brokenness and our spiritual failure; He meets us at that point with the victory of Jesus. Hang it all, that's what I understand the Christian church to be all about, that's what it always has been about, and that's what I understand the message of Luther to be. Luther was saying He meets me there, so I don't have to work my way into heaven, nor do I have to put up with the brokenness, either, but as the Lord Jesus stated at the beginning of His ministry: "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to those who are poor" (I remember Jesus' words, "blessed are the poor in spirit, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven"), "to proclaim liberty to the captives, the recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people." Praise the Lord!

(3) WEIGHING UP THE PROS AND CONS

- Eric Grace

Last Word on Charismatics? Undoubtedly not! The Charismatic movement is here to stay and confrontations will continue throughout the world. The confrontation between John Sabel and Doug Kuhl gave rise to a better understanding of the movement. In their limited presentations, John, with his anxieties and criticisms, told us why he couldn't accept the movement, while Doug, as a Charismatic Pastor, shared of his experiences and clarified misunderstandings of the movement. Using comments made by both speakers I shall endeavour to give an opinion on the Charismatic movement, in the hope that we all can learn from them. (all bible quotes from TEV)

hand the church is guilty of not putting this doctrine into practice. Francis Schaeffer said the church is merely an organizational centre and preaching point with little personal involvement. Of course this is a generalization, but a point well taken. How often do we worship and not know who we are worshipping with? Let us repent and learn; And ask God to give us more love for each other by opening our hearts to the Holy Spirit; and let the love of Jesus flow through us.

Charismatics are accused of being too emotional, living up on cloud nine, seeking these emotional highs. There is no doubt that conversion is an emotional experience. Heaven, even rejoices of the sinner who repents, why then should we not be joyful? Doug stressed that God saved our whole being, including our emotions. Lutherans tend to intellectualize their faith and keep it separate from their emotions. But the fruits of the Spirit are emotional. Gal. 5:22: "Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Faithfulness, Humility and Self-control". The charismatics have to learn not to rely on their emotions but on their faith and the word of God, whereas the church must learn to express their faith through these emotional gifts that the Spirit gives us.

The most predominant danger from either side is stereotyping. Doug admitted that Charismatics had labelled the church as cold, dead and traditional. But he also confessed that it was wrong to do this. And he also realised, as John pointed out, that God works with tremendous power in the ordinariness of old established Churches. But it seems that the church is now guilty of being prejudiced, unduly biased. Statements as:- "Don't get mixed up with that lot; it's demonic; Those nuts that speak in tongues; only emotionally unstable people go in for it; it won't last", have been spoken by Lutherans. The question traditional church people most ask is:- "Does it come from God?" Of course it does! You're either for Christ or against Him. Doug Kuhl is definitely for Christ and is His servant, as you and I are. Even John, as I spoke with him privately afterwards, admitted that the movement is part of Christ's body and God works through it, Let us be open then to the Holy Spirit's power and examine the movement in light of God's word, without our bias and prejudice, and learn those things that God would teach us.

Speaking in Tongues is only one of the Spirit's gifts. You don't have to speak in tongues to be a charismatic. But you can and still be a Christian. 1 Cor. 14:39: "Set your heart on speaking God's message, but do not forbid the speaking with strange sounds". The undue emphasis put on this gift by some extreme Pentecostal groups is of course unscriptural. But scripture does say in 1 Cor. 12:7: "Each one is given some proof of the Spirit's presence for the good of all." 1 Cor. 12 lists a lot of gifts that God has given to his body. And we are to pray and seek God's will, surrendering ourselves to Him, receiving whatever gift He has chosen us to have. Why should these supernatural gifts not be present in the church today? Are we not fighting the devil and all his spiritual armies? God has equipped his body with these gifts so that we'll stand firm in our fight. Let us trust His word and believe that God has this power and gives it to us as we fight in His army.

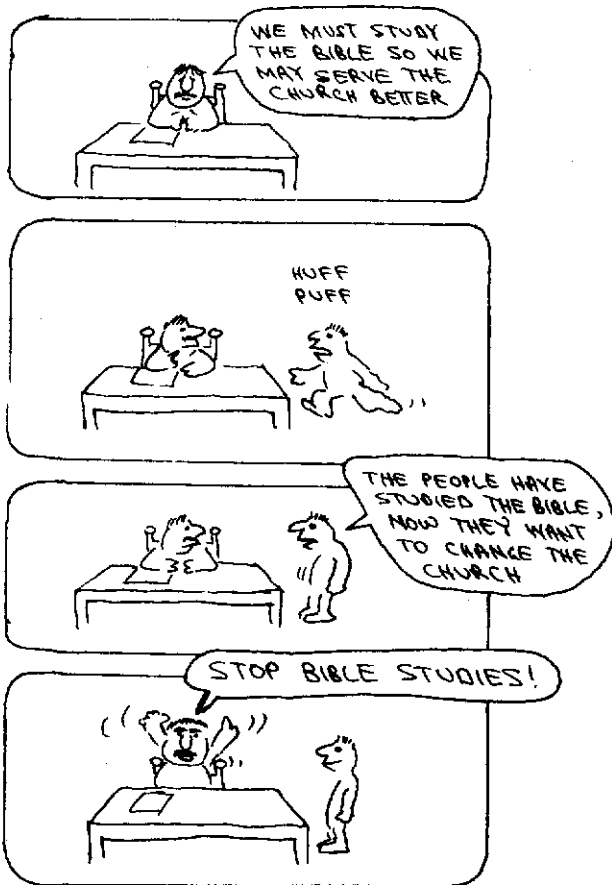
It is ironical that John, incorrectly, thought that the movement was individualistic rather than corporate. Not so at all. Doug stressed the importance of community life and the expression of loving one another in the sharing, caring, and building up of each other as brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. Many people involved with Jacob's ladder can witness to the loving concern that is there. On the other

John saw the thrust of Christianity as preaching Christ crucified and, as his servants, completing the suffering of Christ. He accused the charismatics of preaching a beautiful, triumphant religious movement, presenting the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. He described these as completely opposite. They are, but John, that's what the resurrection is all about! 2 Cor 13:4: "For even though it was in weakness that he was put to death on the cross, it is by God's power that he lives. In union with him we also are weak; but in our relations with you, we shall live with him by God's power." Eph 1:19: "How very great is his power at work in us who believe. This power in us is the same as the mighty strength which he used when he raised Christ from death" Examine 2 Cor 11:23-30 and see the sufferings Paul went through as a servant of Christ. But we find many times in Acts when Paul prophesied, healed, exorcised demons, had visions, performed miracles and even restored life. John 14:11-14; "Whoever believes in Christ will do the works he has done; He will do, whatever we ask in his name". Why can't Lutherans who say, "Sola Scripture", never believe what's written there? Even though we have the doctrine of sanctification, we never practice it. We must forget our German heritage and look to the victory of the resurrection and the power of Christ's name, never forgetting the suffering of Jesus but completing it. Phil. 1:29: "For you have been given the

privilege of serving Christ, not only by believing in him, but also by suffering for him.

Why do Lutherans feel challenged by the Charismatic movement? Why do they feel guilty, not good enough? Because God's spirit is condemning them for unbelief, not in Christ as Saviour, but in Christ as Lord! Are you really letting God's spirit lead your life? Gal. 5:16: "Let the Spirit direct your lives, and do not satisfy the desires of the human nature". It's not possible, you say, we still fail and sin, Sure, but we forget what is behind and look ahead. 2 Cor 12:9b: "For my power is strongest when you are weak." I challenge you now, along with the charismatic movement, not to become a charismatic, but to open your hearts to God's spirit, to look to Jesus and not yourself. And God will bless you in a very real way. As God blessed Doug, giving him wisdom in his personal relationships, so God will bless you with the special gift He has prepared for you, from the beginning of time. 2 Tim 1:7: "For the Spirit that God has given us, does not make us timid; instead, his Spirit fills us with power and love and selfcontrol". I pray that whoever you are, reading this article, that God's Spirit will fill your life with power and love and selfcontrol.

May the name of Jesus Christ be glorified forever.



WHO SAYS I HAVEN'T GOT THE RIGHT ATTITUDE FOR A CHRISTIAN?

