

MTh Dissertation

**The Effects of Signs, Wonders and Miracles on Faith
throughout the History of the Christian Church**

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Introduction.

The emergence of Pentecostalism in the C20th as the major influence in global Christianity has highlighted the role of the Holy Spirit within the Christian Church. Pentecostals and Charismatics form at least 27.7% of organised global Christianity and “the sheer magnitude and diversity of the numbers involved beggar the imagination... In AD2000 [they totalled] 523 million affiliated church members.”¹ This influence has also raised a variety of questions, among which is whether the signs, wonders and miracles that initially brought the Church into existence are valid today. ‘Cessationists’ believe that “certain miraculous gifts ceased long ago, when the apostles died and scripture was complete”.² Warfield, the noted C19th Princeton theologian, wrote ‘Counterfeit Miracles’ as a major contribution to this position. However with the Pentecostal influence in “all state and national denominations,”³ the cessationist’s position is, I believe, now untenable.

Many Christians seem unaware that ‘Pentecostalism’ in most of its forms, arguably existed throughout Christian history in both Western and Eastern mainstream Churches, as well as among fringe and unorthodox groups. The signs, wonders and miracles we now equate with Pentecostals, have been experienced in most generations throughout Church history! Hagiographers (biographers of the ‘saints’) have had to document several miracles in the lives of each candidate for ‘sainthood’ and conclude that signs, wonders and miracles did not cease after the Apostolic period.

In this dissertation I will discuss the effects of signs, wonders and miracles on faith throughout the history of the Christian Church. Although there is an abundance of literature on this subject, I have restricted my research to events that are relevant to Pentecostal Christians. I have included testimonies from Church history, including RC, where it seemed applicable but this, of necessity, eliminated spurious accounts of the ‘miraculous’ in traditions including the extreme RC. With some spectacular

¹ Barrett, D.B., “Global Statistics”, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal Charismatic and Movements*, (Ed. Burgess, Stanley), Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan, 2002, p.284.

² Grudem, W., *Systematic Theology*, Leicester, Inter-Varsity Press, 1994, p.1031.

³ Barrett, “Global Statistics”, *TNIDofPCM*, op. cit. p.285.

wonders apparently appearing within Christianity today, such as ‘gold’ and ‘manna’, I have included a case study on the latter. Miracles that have accompanied revivals are normally accompanied by controversy, but as Denham comments, “the clear teachings put forth in God's Word, will help dispel that which divides us on this subject.”⁴ With a few exceptions, most of the miracles discussed in this work have biblical precedents and I will trace them through the Bible and into Church history with especial interest in the effect they have had on the faith of believers.

Two of the main functions of faith are to produce holy (or saved) lives in believers and to enable them to share the good news of the Christian Gospel:

for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (1Pet.1:9.)

I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. (Philemon 1:6.)

These functions are also the task of the Holy Spirit:

... a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. (Rom.15:16.)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8.)

Faith and the Holy Spirit in partnership are an effective team! In discussing the relationship of the Holy Spirit's power demonstrated in signs, wonders and miracles, on faith, I will investigate their results on the Christian's life and effectiveness in evangelism.

There have been several occasions in the history of the church's expansion that have been linked to miracles signs and wonders. Even if one dismisses the entire history of signs and wonders, it seems fair to assume that pious Christians through the centuries have believed these reports and have responded with renewed evangelical fervor.⁵

In reaction to the spurious ‘miracles’ associated with relics, superstition and unscriptural teaching of the Catholic Church, most of the Reformers from the C16th onwards, discounted miracles as false.

⁴ Denham, Scott, “Today's Signs & Wonders”, <http://members.truepath.com/hf/index.htm>, (10/10/02).

⁵ Burgess, “Signs and Wonders”, *TNIDofPCM*, op. cit. p.1063.

However in the C18th opinions changed, and as Burgess points out, it was Wesley who “introduced into Protestantism an awareness of the Spirit’s operation... and was tolerant of earlier prophetic groups such as the Montanists.”⁶

By reflecting on... ‘The General Delusion of Christians with regard to Prophecy,’ I was fully convinced... that the Montanists, in the second and third centuries, were real, scriptural Christians; and, that the grand reason why the miraculous gifts were so soon withdrawn, was not only that faith and holiness were well-nigh lost; but that dry, formal, orthodox men began even then to ridicule whatever gifts they had not themselves, and to decry them all as either madness or imposture.⁷

Because the words ‘signs’, ‘wonders’ and ‘miracles’, are used interchangeably in Scripture, I will use the generic term ‘miracle’ to describe any supernatural intervention into natural events. In some instances a miracle may have a possible natural cause but the timing will strongly suggest a divine intervention. When God moves in any remarkable way, some Church people seem determined to either deny, or at least to decry, the spectacular. The following comment on the dramatic Kentucky Revival in 1807 could have been written in any era of history where the power of God was visibly demonstrated:

That this extraordinary work sprung from some supernatural cause has been universally granted; but whether the cause was good or evil, has been a matter of much debate, even among those who profess to take the scripture for their only guide. Christians so called, of all others have been the most divided in their judgment concerning it; and while some without hesitation have pronounced it a glorious work of God; others who professed to be children of the same father, followers of the same Saviour, and instructed by the same word of God, have with equal confidence pronounced it *witchcraft, enthusiasm, fanaticism, and the very energy of delusion.* (Author’s emphasis.)⁸

The Bible contains many accounts of the miraculous and a high percentage of the Gospel narratives are devoted to accounts of signs and wonders which signifies their importance to the early Church.

Miracles are notoriously difficult to prove scientifically and I have not tried to do so. Fr. René Laurentin, who is known worldwide for his studies of the miracles of Lourdes, says, “The miracles of the gospel

⁶ Ibid. p.1066.

⁷ Wesley, J., *The Complete Works of John Wesley*, (3rd Edition), “The Ages Digital Library”, Ages Software™, Rio, WI, Version 8, © 2000, Volume 2, Journals 1745-1760, August 1750.

⁸ M’Nemar, Richard, “The Kentucky Revival”, 1807, http://www.sendrevival.com/history/caneridge/the_kentucky_revival/letter.htm. (02/11/02).

and Christian tradition are not well-suited for the scrutiny accorded them by scientific method.”⁹

Although Laurentin differentiates between the common, ordinary gifts of God and the truly miraculous, he says that verification of miracles is often impossible because science insists on a natural cause:

Is it not a basic postulate that everything in nature can be explained? Hence, if something appears to be inexplicable, the normal scientific course is to look for an explanation for as long as necessary, whether it takes months, years or centuries.¹⁰

People rarely have a verifiable record of their disease before they receive their healing and so miraculous healings are especially difficult to prove. Even those who receive their healing in Christian meetings are often unable to prove that their miracle was a direct intervention by God. Parham, the ‘father’ of Pentecostal doctrine, concluded that not all healings in his meetings were supernatural and estimated half of all diseases were psychosomatic: “once people threw back their shoulders and faced the world with a smile and cheerful disposition... [many] afflictions would disappear.”¹¹ George Canty, a veteran Elim minister, who works closely with Reinhard Bonnke, comments:

Most people coming for healing and receiving cures simply expect it, get what they came for, and don’t even come again... About 80% of people for whom we pray have no visible sickness and there is nothing dramatic to witness, or even report. Miracles occur, but only the patients know how real they were. In my Kings Cross campaign, a woman with chronic depression was immediately restored, so much so that her husband beat her up believing she was euphoric over meeting another man... The outsider often has more faith than those in the church. There is a remarkable public attitude towards the miraculous.¹²

When the wonder or miracle is a proven event, there may be possible alternative explanations, which seem more plausible than a miracle, especially if God is not permitted as part of the equation. This is especially so when some very ill people have had unexplained remissions and even full recovery without any Christian influence or even medical assistance

⁹ Laurentin, René, (Trans. Otto, J.), *Miracles in El Paso?*, Ann Arbor, MI, Servant Books, 1982, p.90.

¹⁰ Ibid. p.91.

¹¹ Goff, J. R., *Fields White unto Harvest*, Fayetteville, AR, University of Arkansas Press, 1988, p.43.

¹² Canty, George, *correspondence*, letter (22/11/02).

A The Biblical Basis for Miracles.

In the OT *'pala'*¹³ or *'pele'*¹⁴ are the usual words for 'miracle' but are also translated variously as "surpassing, extraordinary, marvellous, wonder or astonish."¹⁵ In the NT word *'shmei'on'* (semeion), is mostly translated 'sign', but also 'miracle', 'wonder' or 'token' and defined as "miraculous sign, indication, mark, signal by which God authenticates the men sent by him, or by which men prove that the cause they are pleading is God's."¹⁶ The word *'tevrá'* (teras), is mostly translated 'wonder' and defined as "a miracle, an object of wonder."¹⁷ *'Duvnamí'* (dunamis) is translated variously as 'power', 'mighty work', 'strength', 'miracle' and defined as "inherent power, power for performing miracles."¹⁸ Each of these words signifies a supernatural intervention pointing to God as its cause.

Petts says a miracle is "something that is beyond our understanding and cannot be explained naturally.

It is *super-natural, above and beyond* the natural." (Author's emphasis.)¹⁹ Carlson defines a miracle as:

an event occurring in the physical world which cannot be accounted for by any of its known forces... an interruption of the system of nature as we know it. A miracle is a sovereign manifestation of the Spirit, a gift of love [and] is always wrought by God himself. He uses men, but men are only the channels... Men cannot perform miracles. Satan cannot perform miracles. The Bible credits [Satan] with performing 'lying wonders'. He may be able to do things which we cannot understand, but they are not miracles. God originates; Satan only imitates.²⁰

With the prominent position of miracles in the Scriptures and especially in the NT where they are connected with the preaching of the Gospel, there is a clear Biblical basis for miracles.

¹³ Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, McLean, VA, MacDonald, date unknown, # 6381.

¹⁴ Ibid. # 6382

¹⁵ *NASB Concordance*, "Bible Companion Series V1.1a", White Harvest Software Inc., ©1995, ISSC.

¹⁶ Thayer, J., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, Baker House, 1977, # 4592.

¹⁷ Ibid. # 5059.

¹⁸ Ibid. #1411.

¹⁹ Petts, David, *Body Builders*, Mattersey, Mattersey Hall, 2002, p.170.

²⁰ Carlson, G.R., "The Word in the Ministry of Miracles", *Paraclete*, Fall, 1982, p.7.

A 1 Biblical role of Miracles.

Throughout Scripture God has revealed himself as Omnipotent and willing to act supernaturally on behalf of his people:

You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples. (Psalms 77:14.)

The whole assembly became silent as they listened... about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.” (Acts 15:12.)

God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. (Heb.2:4.)

The miracles and wonders in the OT were signs or pointers to the coming Messiah, who would fulfil them. Edersheim explains: “all the miracles and deliverance of Israel’s past would be re-enacted, only in a much wider manner, in the days of the Messiah. Thus the whole past was symbolic, and typical of the future.”²¹ Accordingly, Jesus explained his miracles and teaching from Israel’s history. Thus the multiplication of bread was used to explain the true meaning of manna given in Moses time:

Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill... I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.” (John 6:26-32.)

Peter explained that “Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him.” (Acts 2:22.) Indeed Jesus appealed to miracles to verify his claim as Christ:

‘How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.’ Jesus answered, ‘I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep... even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.’ (John 10:24-38.)

Some theological critics assert that the miracles of the Bible are only mythological accounts or pagan stories adapted by Christians, to explain the mystery of life. Hurtakxi, in his article ‘Miracles - Pagan and Christian,’ outlines three distinctions of Christian miracles from pagan myths and superstition:

²¹ Edersheim, Alfred, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1884, Vol.I, Chap.V, p.163.

Christianity had no magic or noises of paganism, no Jewish ritualistic or sacrificial performances, no secret herbs or roots, no incantations or charms, only the authority of the name of Jesus.

[Miracles] illustrated and proved the resurrection and lordship of Jesus [and] were thus signs that God's promised salvation had come.

[The] effective use of Jesus' name demands faith in Him as the Christ, faith in all that He is and does.²²

Warfield goes to great length, though often contradicting himself, to explain that God only performs miracles when he is introducing new revelation:

Miracles do not appear on the page of Scripture vagrantly, here, there and elsewhere indifferently, without assignable reason. They belong to revelation periods and appear only when God is speaking to His people through accredited messengers declaring His gracious purposes... [When the Apostolic age] closed, the period of miracle-working had passed by also as a mere matter of course.²³

However, such a position denies God's unchanging nature: "I the LORD do not change." (Malachi 3:6.) "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Heb.13:8.) It also places divisions or dispensations into history, which are not found in the Bible. The Bible says nothing of periods of time where God would not intervene on behalf of his people. The miracles recorded throughout the Scriptures vindicated God's messengers and his message. Ruthven writes: "[These] proved or attested nothing; they precipitated the faith or unbelief of the onlookers, and the attestation of this event occurred in the eyes of the believers only."²⁴ In other words, the miracles themselves did not produce faith in people but pointed them to God who performed the miracle. The following polarised response is a typical reaction: "When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, 'We want to hear you again on this subject'... A few men became followers... and believed." (Acts 17:32-34.)

The Bible stands or falls by the miracles recorded in it, especially Jesus' virgin birth, substitutionary death and physical resurrection. "To reject these miracles is to reject both Christ and Scripture. Our

²² Hurtakxi, Larry, "Miracles - Pagan and Christian", *Paraclete*, Fall, 1970, p.13f.

²³ Warfield, B.B., *Counterfeit Miracles*, London, Banner of Truth, 1972, p.25-26.

²⁴ Ruthven, Jon, "The Cessation of the Charismata" *Paraclete*, Summer, 1969, p.23.

Lord, His Word, and His miracles stand or fall together.”²⁵ So also our faith stands or falls by the miraculous – ‘know Jesus, know miracles - no Jesus, no miracles!’ The healings and miracles that Jesus performed through his followers, became evidence of Jesus’ resurrection: “With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.” (Acts 4:33.) T.L.Osborn states: “miracles of healing were manifested in the early church and the true church has never changed.”²⁶ “Each Miracle healing becomes undeniable proof that the Gospel is indeed true!”²⁷

A 2 Miracles and Doctrine.

Christians from diverse, and sometimes conflicting, theological backgrounds are used in miracle ministry. Though miracles may authenticate God’s message and his messengers, they do not necessarily substantiate the messenger’s doctrines. Alan Vincent, a prominent UK House Church leader in the 1980’s, explained this point from the story in Mark 11 where Jesus cursed a fig tree: “fig leaves are man’s religious activities and Jesus will tolerate them where there is fruit. So God will bless and use people who bear spiritual fruit even if their doctrine is incorrect.”²⁸

Jesus said that signs would follow those who believe (Mark 16:17), rather than those who were holy or theologically correct. Paul instructed his readers to “aim for perfection,” (2Cor.13:11) but readily admitted that “I have [not] already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.” (Phil.3:12.) Faith is not the same as perfection and it is faith that God responds to: “Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (Heb.11:6.) MacNutt says: “The main thing that God seems to want to show people is that he is

²⁵ Carlson, op. cit. p.7.

²⁶ Osborn, *Receive Miracle Healing*, Tulsa, OK, OSFO International, 1984, p.41.

²⁷ Osborn, *Gospel Harvest*, “Newsletter”, November 2001.

²⁸ Vincent, Alan, *sermon*, Plymouth Christian Centre, Plymouth, 1985.

real, that he loves ordinary people and that he wants them to draw near to him.”²⁹

Wesley differed with Whitfield over the doctrine of predestination and, against Whitfield’s advice, made an issue over their differences. Wesley then used the physical manifestations in his meetings as evidence that he was theologically right:

Thursday 26. April 1739 — ...I was insensibly led... to pray, that, “if this were not the truth of God, he would not suffer the blind to go out of the way; but, if it were, he would bear witness to his word.” Immediately one, and another, and another sunk to the earth: They dropped on every side as thunderstruck. One of them cried aloud. We besought God in her behalf, and he turned her heaviness into joy. A second being in the same agony, we called upon God for her also: and he spoke peace unto her soul. In the evening I was again pressed in spirit to declare, that “Christ gave himself a ransom for all.” And almost before we called upon him to set to his seal, he answered. One was so wounded by the sword of the Spirit, that you would have imagined she could not live a moment. But immediately his abundant kindness was showed, and she loudly sang of his righteousness.³⁰

White rightly criticizes Wesley for justifying his anti-Calvinist stance because of the manifestations, especially since Wesley was aware that the identical events had been happening under the Calvinist Erskines³¹. “In spite of this, [Wesley] saw the phenomena not only as confirmation of his own calling, but as a sign of the correctness of his doctrine.”³² White goes on to make this helpful comment:

Manifestation of power is not a sign of God's special approval of one's person or of one's theology, nor does it validate one's assessment of a national situation. God is grieved by our party spiritedness and does not bestow power to prove one group

²⁹ MacNutt, Francis, *Healing*, Notre Dame, IN, Ave Maria Press, 1978, p.93.

³⁰ Wesley, op. cit. Vol.I, No 3.

³¹ Erskines: In 1732, Kilsyth was stricken by a pleuritic fever which claimed 60 lives in just six weeks. A few months later devastating flooding swept away houses, drowned livestock and destroyed most of the cornfields. Eyewitnesses testify to hailstones falling which were three inches in circumference. Added to this [Pastor] James Robe encountered opposition within his church and a number of people left. When famine ravaged the town and left people on the brink of starvation it seemed that Revival could not have been further away. Robe however was tenacious and held on to God. His prayers were answered. Revival fires descended on the town. The impact of the Revival on society as a whole was soon felt. However, because there were many outward manifestations, strong wailing and falling down being two examples, Robe was charged with 'emotionalism'. Despite the fact that hundreds were saved, the religious establishment, as so often is the case, were unmoved by the power of God and spoke of the Revival as a "Delusion and work of the Grand Deceiver.

Glass, J., “Kilsyth – Heartland of Revival”, www.cnetwork.co.uk/kilsyth.htm, (28/11/02).

³² White, John, *When the Spirit Comes With Power*, Downers Grove, IL, InterVarsity Press, 1988, p.42.

right and another wrong.³³

Doctrine should be determined by Scripture, not experience. The AOG 'Statement of Faith' on scripture is typical of most Evangelicals' doctrine: "We believe that the Bible (i.e. the Old and New testaments excluding the Apocrypha), is the inspired Word of God, the infallible, all sufficient rule for faith and practice."³⁴ Carlson writes: "Whoever refuses to allow his religious experience to be analyzed for the purpose of seeing whether it is in accord with Scripture is suspect to the fact that he is promoting an unbiblical concept of his own."³⁵

The miraculous should be expected in any prominent Church leadership: "The things that mark an apostle - signs, wonders and miracles - were done among you with great perseverance." (2Cor.12:12.)

The Anabaptist, Jacob Hutter, wrote in 1535:

[God] has given me His blessing. He has made His Word alive in me and many to whom I proclaimed His will, sealing it through the working of His Holy Spirit with mighty miracles and signs³⁶

Although conflicting doctrines may divide Christians, they do not appear to hinder God from working miracles. Where God is honoured and faith is evident, miracles abound!

A 3 Miracles in the Church.

Chrysostom, (AD347-407) was Bishop of Constantinople and his comments on 1Cor.12 are helpful to our understanding of the miraculous in the early Church:

This whole place [1Cor.12:1-2] is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place. And why do they not happen now? Why look now, the cause too of the obscurity hath produced us again another question:

³³ Ibid. p. 128.

³⁴ "Constitutional Minutes", *Assemblies of God General Council Conference*, Nottingham, AOG, 2002, p.24.

³⁵ Carlson, op. cit. p.7.

³⁶ Hutter, Jacob, *Brotherly Faithfulness*, Rifton, NY, Plough Publishing House, 1979, p.138, as quoted by Murray, S., *Biblical Interpretation in the Anabaptist Tradition*, Kitchener, Ontario, Pandora Press, 2000, p.133.

namely, why did they then happen, and now do so no more?³⁷

At first glance it appears that Chrysostom states spiritual gifts had ceased by the end of the C4th. Indeed Warfield uses this passage to affirm his Cessationist position: “Chrysostom fairly teems with expressions implying that miracle-working of every kind had ceased.”³⁸ However as Floris points out, Chrysostom did not mean the gifts had ceased altogether, but “the charismata and especially glossolalia were not manifested in every believer at the time of baptism as it used to be in the apostolic times.”³⁹ He says that Chrysostom’s language is descriptive of the Church at large and he did not intend to convey the idea that there were not people in his church who were truly possessed by the Spirit of God. “The contrary is shown by what he says elsewhere. He acknowledges the presence of all the charismata in those who had made a total surrender and were living a life of devotion and dedication.”⁴⁰

God’s vehicle for salvation and pastoral care is the church, where he has set miracles: “in the church God has appointed... workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing.” (1 Cor.12:28.) Throughout Church history God has continually performed the miraculous but until recently it was often sidelined or devalued by unbelief, spurious counterfeits, fraudsters or fear of the occult. This resulted in the genuine spiritual adherents being persecuted so aggressively that they remained a very small minority. This victimisation still occurs today: “Pentecostals/Charismatics are more harassed, persecuted, suffering, and martyred than any other Christian tradition in recent history.”⁴¹

The Montanists of the C2nd and C3rd had a relationship with God that expected and included the supernatural. The Patristic writings and other accounts of Early Church history abound with testimonies of the miraculous but it is often hard to distinguish between superstition and genuine

³⁷ Chrysostom, “First Corinthians”, *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, “The Ages Digital Library”, op. cit. Vol.12, Homily 29.

³⁸ Warfield, op. cit. p.47.

³⁹ Floris, Andrew, “Chrysostom and the Charismata”, *Paraclete*, Winter, 1971, p.17f.

⁴⁰ Floris, op. cit. p.19.

⁴¹ Barrett, “Global Statistics”, *TNIDofPCM*, op. cit. p.284.

miracles. For example, Bede's writings clearly portray unexpected and otherwise unexplained healings but much of the credit is given to the relics of saints. Bede records that when King Oswald was killed (AD 642), the soil from the place he died provided miraculous cures for many people:

How great his faith was towards God, and how remarkable his devotion, has been made evident by miracles since his death; for, in the place where he was killed by the pagans, fighting for his country, infirm men and cattle are healed to this day. Whereupon many took up the very dust of the place where his body fell, and putting it into water, did much good with it to their friends who were sick. This custom came so much into use, that the earth being carried away by degrees, there remained a hole as deep as the height of a man.⁴²

Bede then describes how a horse was healed after it had collapsed at the same place that Oswald had died and also of a young girl who miraculously recovered after being taken to that same spot. But it does have a parallel Biblical account:

...they threw the man's body into Elisha's tomb. When the body touched Elisha's bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet. (2Kings 13:21.)

Most generations have had, in the true sense of the word, 'spiritualists' - people who were open to the Holy Spirit - and the present Pentecostal movement was birthed in an openness and awareness of the Holy Spirit:

There is no scriptural authority for stating miracles have ceased. Miraculous ministry can and should have an important place today in the life of a church. Its value is evidenced afresh in the ministry of the gospel. Miracles must enter into any Pentecostal revival. They supply a necessary dimension of the revival's distinctive witness to the continuing place of the supernatural in the Church. We ought to see miracles in our churches. If we lack them, we ought to be searching our hearts. By the very nature of the Pentecostal revival, manifestations of the Spirit are a part of the Movement. The revival is a protest against deadness in the churches. So wherever the revival has broken out during this century, there is a particular emphasis upon the miraculous.⁴³

There does seem to be a strong connection between international crises and a greater awareness of spiritual activity including an increase in the miraculous. There is also a link between extra-ordinary miracles and certain people.

⁴² Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*, Book III, Chap. 9, published www.fordham.edu/halsall, (26/10/02).

⁴³ Carlson, op. cit. p.8.

Paul writes that some, rather than all, have been given the gift of miraculous powers: “Now to *each one* the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good... to *another* gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to *another* miraculous powers. (1Cor.12:7-10.) (My emphasis.) Although God gives spiritual gifts to the Church, most of the extra-ordinary miracles are administered by a very small number of people. For some, the fame and publicity becomes too much and this last century has seen many prominent ministers leave the ministry even though they had been greatly used by God in the miraculous. However, this last century has also seen more verifiable extra-ordinary miracles than any other time in the world’s history.

B Miracles of Healing.

With great emphasis on healing in the Gospels and in the NT church, it is not surprising that most orthodox church traditions include divine healing in their liturgies. Throughout history, most churches have consistently expected, and with varying results experienced, miraculous healing, although differing in their interpretation of Scripture, Whilst the outcome may range from no noticeable improvements to spectacularly dramatic miracles, the practice of ‘praying for the sick’ continues. Divine healing can range from recovery of disease, to re-creative miracles and even restoration or resuscitation of life. In each category there are many fascinating stories and I have collated a few that have particularly appealed to me, either from personal interest or personal contact.

In contrast to pagan deities, God is compassionate and cares for his people, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.” (Ex.34:6.) God has revealed himself as a healing God: “I am the LORD, who heals you.” (Ex.15:26.) Indeed the Bible is replete with accounts of God healing people.

The first mention of healing in the Bible is in response to prayer: “Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his slave girls so they could have children again.” (Gen.20:17.) God had told Abimelech that he would answer Abraham’s prayer. This principle of believers asking God to heal others is also seen with Job:

‘My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly... and the LORD accepted Job's prayer. (Job 42:8-9.)

Jesus is “the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being.” (Heb.1:3.) Thus healing became a dominant part of Jesus ministry: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and ... he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.” (Acts 10:38.) “The power of the Lord was present for [Jesus] to heal the sick.” (Luke 5:17.)

Not only did Jesus heal the sick, but he taught his disciples to do the same:

[Jesus] gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. (Luke 9:1-2.)

Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’ (Luke 10:1-9.)

As Womack explains, the early Christians too, expected God to heal them supernaturally:

One of the outstanding characteristics of the New Testament church was the early Christians’ reliance on Christ for their physical healing... Healing by the power of God met a critical human need and at the same time offered supernatural proof for the gospel. After Jesus ascended to the Father, the apostles continued to manifest a divine-healing ministry wherever they went.⁴⁴

Womack further explains that it was in the attention to the sick that the Christian church showed one of its greatest differences from heathen society.

At the first symptoms of sickness, the Greeks and Romans would drive a man from their midst to let him die alone in the streets. They would go to almost any lengths to keep themselves from contagion, for there was no answer to the plague at that time except isolation from the sick. The Christians, on the other hand, would seek out the sick, care for their needs, and pray for divine healing. They trusted in the keeping power of the Great Physician to protect them from the plague while they carried out their ministry.⁴⁵

Justin Martyr, a 2nd Church leader, taught that Jesus ministry of healing was normal experience for the Christian of his day: “It was predicted that our Christ should heal all diseases and raise the dead.”⁴⁶

Speaking of the Church as a whole, Irenaeus said:

⁴⁴ Womack, D., “Divine Healing in the Post -Apostolic Church” *Paraclete*, Spring, 1968, p.3f.

⁴⁵ Womack, op. cit. p.6.

⁴⁶ Justin Martyr, “First Apology”, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, “The Ages Digital Library”, op. cit. Vol.I,

Nor does she perform anything by means of angelic invocations, or by incantations, or by any other wicked curious art; but, directing her prayers to the Lord, who made all things, in a pure, sincere, and straightforward spirit, and calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, she has been accustomed to work miracles for the advantage of mankind, and not to lead them into error.⁴⁷

This simple, pure, faith in God is based on Biblical evidence and personal experience. It has produced hope and comfort to those in need as well as health to those who are sick. “My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body.” (Proverbs 4:20-22.)

B 1 Recovery of Diseases.

The finality of death has a sobering effect on people and when loved ones are sick, those involved in their healing, regularly receive respect and honour. The Apostle Paul was not embarrassed to accept practical help from those God had healed through his ministry:

[Publius] welcomed us to his home and for three days entertained us hospitably... Paul went in to see [Publius' father] and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. They honoured us in many ways and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed. (Acts 27:7-10)

When people were healed, Paul took the opportunity to explain the Gospel and encouraged his hearers to repent. However Paul rejected any undue honour that elevated him above a man:

Barnabas and Paul... tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: “...we too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God...” Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them. (Acts 14:8-19.)

The practice of praying for the sick continued after the Apostles died and in AD200 we learn of Proculus, a Montanist prophet and healer at Rome. There is a story that he even prayed for the Emperor Severus⁴⁸ and ‘cured him by anointing.’

Chap.48.

⁴⁷ Irenaeus, “Irenaeus Against Heresies”, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, op. cit. Vol.I, Book 2, Chap.32, N°5.

⁴⁸ Severus: Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax, (AD146–211), Roman emperor from 193–211. In 208 he took an army to Britain to suppress a rebellion in the north of the country and later died at York. “The Oxford World Encyclopedia”, Oxford University Press, 1998, IFinger Ltd, 2000.

Even Severus... was graciously mindful of the Christians; for he sought out the Christian Proculus... and in gratitude for his having once cured him by anointing, he kept him in his palace till the day of his death.⁴⁹

During the Dark and Middle Ages, the healing profession was found primarily in the Church. Indeed the word 'hospital' came from the Latin '*hospes*' meaning 'host', or 'guest'⁵⁰ and came into usage through the care given by the church to those in need.

William Branham was greatly used in healing the sick as well as other miraculous signs. In 1950 King George VI was suffering with multiple sclerosis and unable to stand for more than five minutes at a time. Through his Private Secretary, the King had heard of Branham and requested personal prayer. Branham went to Buckingham Palace to pray for King George and he was healed. Although the Royal Archives failed to find any reference to Branham's visit,⁵¹ not every activity of the monarch is kept on file. Branham said that he was pleased to have been of service to the king:

When I went to England, over there to see him, the Lord had healed him. He couldn't even stand up over five minutes at a time. And he, I believe the second day, he played eighteen holes of golf. And never was bothered with it no more until the very day he died.⁵²

George Jeffreys, the co-founder of Elim Pentecostal Churches, was also greatly used of God in the Healing Ministry, as was his brother Stephen. Darragh, who recorded George Jeffreys's crusades in photographs and written testimonies, comments:

My purpose in compiling the many testimonies contained in this book is to encourage the sick and suffering to trust the Great Physician. By reading of cases similar to their own, faith will be strengthened in the Word of God which promises healing for the body as well as salvation for the soul... I have thanked God for a Gospel that meets the need of all.⁵³

⁴⁹ Tertullian, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, op. cit. Vol.III, First Part, 5, "To Scapula", Chap.4.

⁵⁰ "The New Oxford Dictionary of English", Oxford University Press. 1998, IFinger Ltd, 2000.

⁵¹ The Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, *correspondence*, letter (21/11/02).

⁵² Branham, W., (adapted from a number of accounts related in different messages preached by William Branham), www.biblebelievers.org/bblife.htm, (10/10/00).

⁵³ Darragh, R. E., *In Defence of His Word*, London, Elim, 1932, pp. 9-11.

The following is a sample of the testimonies:

I had a rupture for over twenty-eight years, suffered great pain, and lost many a good job through it. On August 20th 1931 I was in bed very ill with malarial fever but I made up my mind I would get up and go to the Tent on the Fair Ground here in Sheffield and hear Principal George Jeffreys. I was anointed and prayed for and instantly healed through faith in Jesus Christ, believing that there is nothing beyond the power of our loving God.⁵⁴

These ‘Healing Missions’, where folk were encouraged to expect God to perform public miracles, are typically Pentecostal. Although these are still effective today, attracting crowds of many thousands, they have not been supported by all Christians. In the “Churches Council for Health and Healing” report, Howell talks of:

the unhealthiness of always looking for miracles. Seeking the sensational is at best to miss the point and at worst to be quite contrary to the way of Christ who so often said “tell no one of it.”⁵⁵

Weatherhead was also scathing, especially of George Jeffreys’s healing missions:

This book offers no approval of the methods used by the Four Square Gospel Movement in the healing missions carried out by Pastor Jeffreys and others. No doubt his intentions are excellent, but the dangers attending his methods are so great that neither from the point of view of psychology nor from that of true religion can they be approved.⁵⁶

Although some of his objections were genuine, most of them were unfounded. The power of suggestion is powerful, especially in large crowds but to describe Jeffreys’s call to believe God, ‘dangerous’,⁵⁷ is at best, misguided. Quoting from the 1930 Bampton Lectures, Weatherhead also comments that “...mission should be essentially an act of worship evoking faith, and faith not in a cure but in God.”⁵⁸ He concludes by approving a report by the 1920 Lambeth Conference: “...we are

⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 39.

⁵⁵ Watt, J., (ed.), *What is wrong with Christian Healing?*, London, The Churches Council for Health and Healing, 1993, p.55.

⁵⁶ Weatherhead, L., *Psychology, Religion and Healing*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1952, p.201.

⁵⁷ Ibid. p.204.

⁵⁸ Ibid. p.205.

not prepared to give any encouragement to public missions of healing.”⁵⁹ However, with a great deal of media publicity⁶⁰ people attended the Jeffreys’s missions in great numbers. Today, even greater crowds are attending healing missions conducted by Bonnke, Gammons and others. In 1999 Gammons had an estimated crowd of four million attend a crusade in the Philippines.⁶¹

B 2 Re-creative Healings.

Jesus ministry was not restricted to making people feel better – he ministered re-creative healings:

“Stretch out your [shrivelled] hand.” So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. (Matt.12:8-14.)

Miracles of re-creative healings are dramatic and make a lasting impression as well as a quite a stir.

R.W.Shambach recalls the occasion of ‘the greatest miracle he ever saw’ during A.A.Allen’s Healing Crusade in Birmingham, Alabama 1959 when 26 diseases were healed in a four year old boy.

The boy was born blind, deaf and mute. Both arms were crippled and deformed. His elbows protruded up into his little tummy; his knees touched his elbows. Both legs were crippled and deformed; he had club-feet. ⁶²

After encouraging the people to release their faith through the offering, Allen said, “I’m being carried away in the Spirit” and began to ‘see’ the mother and baby, naming their home-town and medical history. When he asked for the baby, the mother ran to Allen for prayer. Schambach recollects:

The first thing I saw as Brother Allen prayed was that tongue snap back in the mouth like a rubber band... I saw two brand new brown eyes! I knew God had opened his eyes, and if God opened the eyes, I knew He had unstopped the deaf ears.

Then those little arms... for the first time, they stretched out. The legs cracked like wood popping. All of sudden, I saw God form toes out of those club feet as easily as child forms something with silly-putty. The crowd was watching by this time going wild! I’ve never seen any people shout and rejoice so much in all my life.

I saw that baby placed on his feet, and he began to run for the first time in his life.

⁵⁹ Ibid. p.208.

⁶⁰ All the major British national and local newspapers ran stories of Jeffreys’s missions.

⁶¹ Gammons, Peter, *Vital Truths*, Reach Out Ministries International, 2000, p.84.

⁶² Shambach, R.W., *interview by Benny Hinn*, broadcast on Hinn’s TV programme, ‘This is your Day’, October 2001.

He had never seen his mama before, never said a word, but he began running across the platform--and I was running right after him to catch him. He leaped into his mama's arms, and I heard him say his first word, 'Mama.'⁶³

An interesting addendum to this miracle was that although the mother had given her last \$20.00 in the offering that evening, before she returned home, people had given her gifts totalling \$230.00 – enough to travel home, pay all their bills and plenty left over!⁶⁴

In 2000, a lady came to our church in Deal, Kent. She had a chronic skin complaint and was unable to grow her fingernails much beyond the quick. She allowed me to pray for her and by the next morning God had grown her nails to full length, although her skin condition took longer to clear up. Her nails still remain healthy and strong. Skin problems are often caused by emotional and nervous conditions and this situation was no exception. The lady concerned explained later that she was 'scared to come back because she did not deserve God's love.' Whilst she came periodically to us, she never became a regular attendee of our church.

B 3 Restoration to Life.

There are three specific instances of the dead raised to life in the OT (1Kings 17:17-23; 2Kings 4:32-37; 2Kings 13:21). The Gospels record that Jesus raised three people from the dead (Widow's son: Luke 7:12-15; Jairus' daughter: Luke 8:49-55; Lazarus: John 11:43-44). Although Jesus commissioned his disciples to raise the dead, (Matt.10:8) there is no record in the Gospels where this happened. However after Jesus resurrection, Peter raised Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:37-40) and Paul raised Eutychus (Acts 20:9-12). Understandably, great awe and wonder came on the people!

In the C16th, Anabaptist Pilgram Marpeck assured his readers that miracles, including the dead being raised, were still happening. In a very matter-of-fact way he explains that some of those who had been martyred were sharing their testimony among his congregation! However, he does point out that these miracles are happening among those who 'are powerfully moved by the Spirit of Christ' or the 'Pentecostals'!

⁶³ Schambach, R.W., *You Can't Beat God Givin': Miracle Testimonies from Ordinary People Serving an Extraordinary God*, Power Publications, 1994, as quoted on <http://www.lightheffire.com/truestory1.html>, (20/05/03).

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Moreover one also marvels when one sees how the faithful God, raises from the dead several such brothers and sisters of Christ after they were hanged, drowned, or killed in other ways. Even today, they are found alive and we can hear their own testimony. [These things occurred] among those who are powerfully moved and driven by the living Word of God and the Spirit of Christ.⁶⁵

In his book 'Heaven and Angels', Baker publishes several accounts of people raised to life and names the periodicals and newspapers which recorded the details. The following account of Laura Johnson, Baker says, was recorded in 'Word and Work', December, 1937; 'The Comforter', February 1938; 'The Daily Clarion Ledger', and in various papers of the Associated Press throughout the United States:

Although she died with hopeless, incurable afflictions of many years, when raised from the dead she was every whit healed. For eleven days she could walk only on the tips of her toes, praising the Lord with uplifted hands.⁶⁶

Baker states that for a time she neither ate nor slept. She was interviewed in this condition by representatives of the Press and the miracle reported in secular papers throughout the country. Thousands of people came to see the 'Miracle Girl', as the press described her, and "great numbers of those who came were healed of their diseases and afflictions when prayed for by Miss Johnson."⁶⁷

Included in Baker's report was a picture of Laura Johnson.

In 1994, during the Rwandan civil war, Emmanuel Twagirimana was mortally injured from a bomb blast. His arm was severed from his body and his leg was also ripped apart. Six days later, he died from malnutrition and infection as no one was able to care for him. Twagirimana had a life changing experience as he personally met Jesus who escorted him around part of heaven and also showed him the horrors of hell. After what seemed a few hours, Jesus told him it was time to return to the earth and commissioned him with a clear message to take to the church. When Twagirimana returned to his decomposing body, the other dying people who had been unable to even crawl away from their enemies managed to flee from the 'ghost' that had been dead for seven days! Unlike Ekechukwu

⁶⁵ Klassen, William, & Klaassen, Walter, *The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck*, Scotdale, PA, Herald Press, 1978, p.49-51, as quoted by Murray, S., *Biblical Interpretation in the Anabaptist Tradition*, Kitchener, Ontario, Pandora Press, 2000, p.134.

⁶⁶ Baker, H.A., *Heaven and the Angels*, Minneapolis, MN, Osterhus Publishing House, date unknown, published <http://thebiblerevival.com/teachings/books>, (20/11/02), p.9.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p.9.

reported below, Twagirimana's injuries were not healed and he needed constructive surgery.⁶⁸ When Twagirimana preached at my church in Deal, Kent in 2001 he made a great impact on the whole congregation. We had only seen one conversion in the two previous years but that service was a catalyst for another genuine conversion and renewed commitment from others. The description of the reality of eternal life with Jesus in heaven and eternal death in hell without Jesus was given with such vivid personal insight that everyone was challenged.

In October 1995 I ministered at the AFM in Glen Norah, Harare, Zimbabwe. The church is positioned in the poorest part of the city and was a struggling congregation until Pastor Chiangwa prayed for a lady who had died. When she returned to life the church grew phenomenally,⁶⁹ and had over two thousand attendees when I was there.

On Saturday December 8th 2001 the Nigerian newspaper 'The Post Express' had for its banner headline "Bonnke Raises Man from Death in Onitsha"⁷⁰ On the morning of Friday November 30th 2001, Daniel Ekechukwu, was travelling when his car brakes failed. The injuries he sustained from the resulting crash proved fatal. However, Nneka his wife, had the verse "women received back their dead raised to life again" (Heb.11:35) ringing in her mind. Although the local hospital had certified Daniel as dead at 11.30pm Nneka refused to accept death was final for her husband. The mortuary had no cold storage so the mortician administered the usual chemical injection and prepared the body for embalming on Saturday. During the early hours of Saturday morning the mortician was awakened by what he called 'church singing' coming from the mortuary. The singing stopped but later restarted with clapping. When it happened the third time the mortician became so frightened that insisted that the body was removed. Meanwhile Nneka wanted her husband's body taken to the church in Onitsha. Placing the corpse in a room underneath the main meeting hall where Reinhard Bonnke was preaching and praying one of the pastors noticed a slight twitching of Daniel's stomach. Soon the

⁶⁸ Twagirimana, Emmanuel, (Rubaduka, Enoch, interpreter) *interview*, personal, (21/11/01).

⁶⁹ Chiangwa, Cossum, *interview*, personal, (08/10/95).

⁷⁰ Cauty, G., and Murpree, R., "Telegram Revival Report", *Christ for all Nations*, January, 2002.

corpse began to breath and so the funeral clothes were removed and, because he was ‘as stiff as an iron rod’, they began to massage Daniel’s body. The time was 5.15pm Sunday 2nd December – nearly two days after he had died! Initially Daniel was dazed and unable to collect his thoughts together but by the evening he had full consciousness and coherence. He was completely healed!⁷¹

Canty concludes the article by emphasising the facts and the faith:

This is no unsupported claim of bringing someone to life privately, as in a house. Here was a public event, an open demonstration of revival from death. The faith of Nneka dictated the whole event and her faith was honoured. By whom? If not by God, who else?⁷²

C Miracles of Body Reactions.

Although there has been much criticism of “falling under the Holy Spirit” including from some Pentecostals, it is a phenomena that has occurred throughout Church history. Ruth Heflin writes: “I find it difficult to understand that some people don’t want to fall down in the Spirit. If people only realize that when they are slain in the Spirit they are falling into greatness, surely they would fall down more often.”⁷³ Throughout church history, there seem to be seasons, or phases, when certain physical reactions are common place and then periods when they are rare. Although I have arranged these reactions into various groups, I believe them to be physical reactions to spiritual encounters or stimuli, rather than ‘spiritual manifestations’. Guynes in his study of human responses to the influences of the Holy Spirit, makes a very good case for this explanation:

The degree of harmony between human nature and disposition and the Holy Spirit will affect the type and extent of human reactions to His power and will determine whether or not the Holy Spirit is permitted to manifest Himself through human agency.⁷⁴

Guynes continues to explicate that in 1Cor.12-14, Paul deals with both human reaction to spiritual stimulation and spiritual manifestation. The nine spirituals (the word ‘gifts’ is not in the original Greek

⁷¹ Ibid. my précis of the article.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ward-Heflin, Ruth, *River Glory*, Hagerstown, MD, McDougal Publishing, 1999, p.133.

⁷⁴ Guynes, D.R., *Human Reaction and Spiritual Manifestation*, *Paraclete*, Spring 1970, p.27.

text) in 1Cor.12:8-11 are “recognized categories of Holy Spirit manifestation and are never to be confused with mere human reaction to the Spirit.”⁷⁵ There are human reactions to spiritual influences that are extremely Biblical and most desirable. David in exuberant thanksgiving “danced before the Lord with all his might.” (2Sam.6:14.) The lame man “walking and jumping and praising God.”(Acts 3:8.) These are essentially types of human response or reaction to divine stimulation. In some, people were told how to react; in others, reaction was spontaneous. Guynes further comments: “in this regard great care must be taken to ensure that human reaction is always glorifying and edifying.”⁷⁶

Whenever Almighty God meets with mortal man, a reaction occurs, which is often unpredictable. Not all of these responses or ‘spiritual experiences’ result in conversion but they certainly made a lasting impression on the people concerned and some have been extraordinary and occasionally amusing!

C 1 Slain in the Spirit, Trances and Contortions.

Although the expression ‘slain in the Spirit’ is fairly modern, the experience is not. Also known as ‘overcome by the Spirit’ or ‘falling under the power,’ Alexander puts this phenomenon in the general rubric of “possession trance.”⁷⁷ Whilst being ‘slain in the Spirit’ is not directly mentioned in Scripture, there are several instances that clearly describe the phenomenon:

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: ‘Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.’ (Rev.1:17.)

[Peter] fell into a trance. (Acts 10:10.)

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know--God knows. (2Cor 12:2.)

He stripped off his robes and also prophesied in Samuel's presence. He lay that way all that day and night. This is why people say, “Is Saul also among the prophets?” (1Sam.19:24.)

the priests could not perform their service [...could not stand to minister AV] because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the temple of God. (2Chron.5:14.)

⁷⁵ Ibid. p.29.

⁷⁶ Ibid. p.29.

⁷⁷ Alexander, P., “Slain in the Spirit”, *TNIDofPCM*, op. cit. p. 1072.

Maria Woodworth-Etter (1844-1924) was one of the most successful healing evangelists of the last hundred years. A particular characteristic of her meetings was the trances she and others experienced.

Lawyer C., one of the leading lawyers of the city, was convinced of the reality of the religion of Jesus by seeing me under the control of the Holy Ghost power while in a trance. Sometimes standing with my face and hands raised to heaven, my face shining with the brightness of heaven; other times the tears streaming down my face, with mute preaching, pleading with sinners to come to Christ; other times lying for hours, sometimes as one dead, and divers operations of the Spirit, conscious all the time, but entirely controlled by the power of the Holy Ghost. Always while in these conditions in this meeting, and all others, the fear of God would fall upon the people. Sinners would be stricken down over the house. Many would be saved; they would rush to the altar crying for mercy. Sometimes scores would be converted while God would use me in this way.⁷⁸

These trances would last for hours and sometimes days as people were totally captivated in God's presence:

A woman fell, struck down, and lay till evening. They took her home, and she lay till the next Sunday, eight days in all; then she came out shouting and preaching; and without taking any nourishment, she came straight to meeting, preached, and told the wonderful experience that she had had.⁷⁹

Whenever people have been open to the Holy Spirit and desiring his gifts, there have been physical and emotional responses and reactions. During the Reformation, the 'spirituals' (who were mainly, but not entirely, Anabaptists) experienced all of the spiritual gifts described in the NT. George Williams, who was critical of Holy Spirit manifestations, referred to an area in Germany where some Anabaptists were "excited by mass hysteria, experienced healings, glossolalia, contortions and other manifestations of a camp-meeting revival."⁸⁰

John Wesley (1703–91) describes how the emotional response to the Holy Spirit offended some onlookers, but for those personally affected, it was a life-changing experience:

Tues. May 1. — Many were offended again, and, indeed, much more than before. For at Baldwin-Street my voice could scarce be heard amidst the groanings of some, and the cries of others, calling aloud to Him that is "mighty to save." ...A Quaker,

⁷⁸ Woodworth-Etter, M.B., *Signs & Wonders*, New Kensington, PA, Whitaker House, 1997, p.53.

⁷⁹ Ibid. p.95.

⁸⁰ Williams, George, *The Radical Reformation*, Kirksville, MO, Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1992, p.443, as quoted by Murray, S., *Biblical Interpretation in the Anabaptist Tradition*, op. cit. p.134.

who stood by, was not a little displeased at the dissimulation of those creatures, and was biting his lips and knitting his brows, when he dropped down as thunderstruck. The agony he was in was even terrible to behold. We besought God not to lay folly to his charge. And he soon lifted up his head, and cried aloud, “Now I know thou art a prophet of the Lord.”⁸¹

In his autobiography, Charles Finney (1792-1875) also describes these phenomena and the divisions they caused:

Many cases had occurred of what the Methodists call “falling under the power of God.” This the Presbyterians had resisted; consequently a bad state of feeling had arisen between [them]. The Methodists accused the Presbyterians of having opposed the revival among them because of these cases of falling... I had not preached very long one evening when just at the close of my sermon, I observed a man fall from his seat near the door, and the people gathered around him to take care of him. From what I saw I was satisfied that it was a case of falling under the power of God... On inquiry I learned that it was one of the principal members of the Presbyterian church that had fallen! And it was remarkable that during this revival there were several cases of this kind among the Presbyterians but none among the Methodists. This led to such confessions and explanation among the members of the different churches as to secure a state of great cordiality and good feeling among them.⁸²

Some of the most spectacular physical responses to the Holy Spirit were seen during the ‘Cane Ridge Revival’ in Kentucky, also known as the ‘Second Great Awakening.’ At the end of the C18th Methodists were often called ‘Shouting Methodists’ due to their habit of shouting praises to God and the Kentucky Revival extended this vocal exuberance to other denominations. It began in the summer of 1799 at the close of a Presbyterian communion service. A woman cried out and John McGee an itinerant Methodist, overcome by the Holy Spirit, began to shout. He was told to go back and be quiet, as the Presbyterians would not tolerate the confusion. McGee recalls:

I turned to go back and was near falling, [but] the power of God was strong upon me. I turned again, and losing sight of fear of man, I went through the house shouting and exhorting with all possible ecstasy and energy, and the floor was soon covered by the slain.⁸³

The revival spread throughout the area, usually through ‘camp meetings’, and included all

⁸¹ Wesley, op. cit. Vol.1 Journals, October 14th 1735- Nov. 29 1745, No 3, p.208.

⁸² Finney, Charles G., (Ed. Wessel, H.), *The Autobiography of Charles G. Finney*, Minneapolis, MN, Bethany House, 1977, p.100.

⁸³ Johnson, *Frontier Camp Meeting*, p.35, as quoted by Hudson, Winthrop S., *Shouting Methodists*, The Revival Archives, <http://members.truepath.com/hf/shouting.htm>, (12/03/03).

denominations In August 1801, Barton Stone led a revival in Cane Ridge, Kentucky that became the most famous of the 'camp meetings'. It lasted a week with over 23,000 people attending. The preaching was simple, lively, and persuasive, with preachers from different denominations sharing the platform. The common people were deeply affected, and strong emotional responses were considered proofs of conversion. Often these produced strange physical manifestations including dancing, running and singing. The noise of the meetings was so great that some said 'the noise was like the roar of Niagara.'⁸⁴ Other camp meetings followed and swept through Kentucky, Tennessee and many of the southern states.

M'Nemar, who was an eyewitness of this revival, wrote an account of it in 1808, entitled 'The Kentucky Revival'. Here he explains the strange reactions:

The rolling exercise... consisted in being cast down in a violent manner, doubled with the head and feet together, and rolled over and over like a wheel, or stretched in a prostrate manner, turned swiftly over and over like a log. This was considered very debasing and mortifying, especially if the person was taken in this manner thro' the mud, and sullied therewith from head to foot.

The 'jerks' were even more demeaning and mortifying!

The exercise commonly began in the head which would fly backward and forward, and from side to side, with a quick jolt, which the person would naturally labor to suppress, but in vain... He must necessarily go as he was stimulated, whether with a violent dash on the ground and bounce from place to place like a foot-ball, or hop round with head, limbs and trunk, twitching and jolting in every direction, as if they must inevitably fly asunder. And how such could escape without injury, was no small wonder to spectators. By this strange operation the human frame was commonly so transformed and disfigured, as to lose every trace of its natural appearance.⁸⁵

These extreme physical reactions brought much ridicule from spectators who often tried to disrupt the camp meetings. However as Finley explains, their opposition brought dramatic and unexpected results which helped to spread the revival:

I saw one... on a large, white horse, ride furiously into the praying circle, uttering the most horrid imprecations. Suddenly, as if smitten by lightning, he fell from his horse. At this a shout went up from the religious multitude, as if Lucifer himself

⁸⁴ Curtis, Ken, (Ed.), *The Second Great Awakening*, The Revival Archives, <http://members.truepath.com/hf/2ndawake.htm>, (12/03/03).

⁸⁵ M'Nemar, op. cit.

had fallen. I trembled, for I feared God had killed the bold and daring blasphemer. He exhibited no signs whatever of life; his limbs were rigid, his wrists pulseless, and his breath gone. Several of his comrades came to see him, but they did not gaze long till the power of God came upon them, and they fell like men slain in battle... for thirty hours he lay, to all human appearance, dead. During this time the people kept up singing and praying. At last he exhibited signs of life, but they were fearful spasms... It was not long however, till his convulsions ceased, and springing to his feet, his groans were converted into loud and joyous shouts of praise. The dark, fiend-like scowl which overspread his features, gave way to a happy smile, which lighted up his countenance.⁸⁶

M'Nemar further explains that only the power of God “could suspend the functions of animal life for an hour, a day, or a week, and again restore them with additional brightness.”⁸⁷ The repeated and often dangerous falls as encountered in this revival should normally result in “wounds and bruises, broken limbs, and aching heads... [Not even] nature’s power [could] extend to their resurrection, after an hour, a week, or nine days in a trance.”⁸⁸

The ‘falling exercise’ baffled both the believer and the unbeliever. All their experiments and researches of “feeling the pulse, changing the situation of the person, applying the smelling bottles, bathing with camphire (sic), or cold water, letting of blood,”⁸⁹ failed to explain this phenomenon satisfactorily. When people arose from a trance they were expected to give exhortations which were delivered by all ranks and colours, including small children. These were “so evidential of a divine power, so searching to the conscience, so wounding to the sinner that the most obstinate unbelievers have fallen down, like those of old, and confessed that God was in them of a truth.”⁹⁰

When people go into a ‘trance’ for hours or longer, it is not uncommon for them to later recall experiencing God’s love and sometimes a personal encounter with angels or even Jesus Christ. In Woodworth-Etter’s meetings, this would regularly happen:

⁸⁶ Finley, James B., (Ed. Strickland, W.P.), *Great Revival in the West*, New York, Hunt and Eaton, Date unknown, Chapter 21, “Revival Library”, (Ed. Cauchi, Tony), Kings Library, Bishops Waltham, ©1998-2001.

⁸⁷ M'Nemar, op. cit.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

He fell in another trance that lasted twenty-two hours. His spirit left the body, was carried away to heaven, and he saw millions and millions of human beings, all clothed in pure white. He heard the sweetest music, saw most beautiful flowers, and the city with its beauty and grandeur. He could not describe it all. This time he had his identity. His spirit had perfect freedom and liberty.⁹¹

H.A.Baker was a missionary to China and founded an orphanage in the Yunnan Province in the early 1920's. Chinese beggar children from his orphanage had visions of heaven after a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Although none of the adults experienced these, the children's stories were consistent with the Biblical accounts of heaven even though they were illiterate and had not read or heard any Bible stories beyond the very basic Gospel truths. In his book 'Visions Beyond The Veil,' Baker explains that their experiences are unexplainable on natural grounds:

Neither can these experiences be explained as any sort of mental excitement, religious frenzy, natural emotion, nervous state, nor any sort of self-produced condition. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit came upon normal children in a normal state of mind free from all the conditions just mentioned.⁹²

Baker's son attended at the Assemblies of God Bible College at Hampstead, London and described these events to the students there in 1931.⁹³

C 2 Laughing.

Passionate demonstration of faith has always been criticised by others as fanaticism:

Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume... [But Judas] objected. (John 12:3-4.)

Wesley makes a succinct comment on the criticism of 'fanaticism' of which his followers were accused:

The very thing which Mr. Shinstra calls fanaticism, is no other than heart-religion; in other words, "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." These must be *felt*, or they have no being. All, therefore, who condemn inward feelings in the

⁹¹ Woodworth-Etter, op. cit. p.90.

⁹² Baker, H.A., *Visions Beyond The Veil*, Youngstown, OH, Christ Mission, date unknown, published <http://thebiblerevival.com/teachings/books>, (20/11/02).

⁹³ As told to me by a student with Baker, retired AOG minister Harold Webster, who is a member of my congregation. Webster, H., *interview*, personal, (15/03/03).

gross, leave no place either for joy, peace, or love in religion; and consequently reduce it to a dry, dead carcass. (Author's emphasis.)⁹⁴

The 'laughing revival' of the mid 1990's was certainly extreme if not 'fanatical'! It affected in one way or another, most of the Christian church and many thought it was a new phenomenon. Although it polarised Christians and sometimes divided churches, many were dramatically changed through it. From a personal experience, the 'spirit of laughter' and associated awareness of the Holy Spirit radically changed my life and ministry.

John Wesley described people who experienced 'laughing fits' as being 'buffeted by Satan' and referred to people being 'delivered' from the laughing by prayer:

In the evening, such a spirit of laughter was among us, that many were much offended... [They] were suddenly seized in the same manner as the rest, and laughed whether they would or no, almost without ceasing. Thus they continued for two days, a spectacle to all; and were then, upon prayer made for them, delivered in a moment.⁹⁵

A possible reason for crediting Satan with this 'spirit of laughter' is his resolution to "to labor after continual seriousness, not willingly indulging myself in any the least levity of behavior, or in laughter, — no, not for a moment."⁹⁶ The fact that the 'spirit of laughter' had come upon John and Charles in the early 1730's before they were truly converted may be another reason:

I was a little surprised at some, who were buffeted of Satan in an unusual manner, by such a spirit of laughter as they could in no wise resist... I could scarce have believed the account they gave me, had I not known the same thing ten or eleven years ago... But one day, just as we were beginning to sing, he burst out into a loud laughter. I asked him if he was distracted; and began to be very angry, and presently after to laugh as loud as he. Nor could we possibly refrain, though we were ready to tear ourselves in pieces, but we were forced to go home without singing another line.⁹⁷

However by November of 1740, Wesley associated laughter with praise and joy rather than an attack of the devil:

⁹⁴ Wesley, op. cit. Volume 3, Journals 1770-1773, August 1771.

⁹⁵ Ibid. Volume 1, Journals 1739-1740, May 1740.

⁹⁶ Ibid. February 1738.

⁹⁷ Ibid. May 1740.

The fever came rushing upon me as a lion, ready to break all my bones in pieces... My mouth was filled with laughter, and my tongue with joy. My eyes overflowed with tears, and I began to sing aloud. One who stood by said, 'Now he is light headed.' I told her, 'O no; I am not light-headed; but I am praising God; God is come to my help, and pain is nothing; glory be to God on high!' I now found why it was not expedient for me to recover my health sooner: Because then I should have lost this experimental proof, how little every thing is which can befall the body, so long as God carries the soul aloft, as it were on the wings of an eagle.⁹⁸

The Bishop of Exeter George Lavington, a contemporary and critic of Wesley, was not convinced these 'fits of laughter' were to be ascribed to Satan and went on to say: "I entirely agree with Mr Wesley, that they are involuntary and unavoidable."⁹⁹ Lavington explained that Oliver Cromwell also experienced these laughing bouts.

I don't remember any of these laughing-fits among Papists. But they were very common among the French Prophets in their agitations. Mr. Aubrey, in his MISCELLANIES (Page 117), relates the same thing of Oliver Cromwell. "Oliver, says he, had certainly this afflatus. One that was at the Battle of Dunbar told me that Oliver was carried on with a divine impulse: he did laugh so excessively as if he had been drunk. The same fit of laughter seized him just before the battle of Naseby." 'Tis a question undecided, whether Oliver was more of the enthusiast, or the hypocrite: and I presume the fits are no proof of a good cause either in the protector or the Methodist."¹⁰⁰

One of the best-known people associated with 'spirit of laughter' is Rodney Howard-Browne. Describing his 'baptism of fire', he said it was as though "all of a sudden somebody had taken gasoline and put a lighted match to it. The fire of God fell on me and I was immersed in the liquid fire of the Holy Spirit."¹⁰¹ He became completely inebriated in the Holy Ghost and was beside himself, laughing uncontrollably. He went from laughter, to weeping, to tongues, back to laughter and weeping again. For a two-week period, he felt the tangible presence of God.

Howard-Browne's influence soon reached worldwide proportions. Ken and Nancy Curtis of Lakeland, FL recorded a videotape, 'The Laugh Heard Round the World,' documenting the spread of this revival

⁹⁸ Ibid. November 1740.

⁹⁹ Lavington, George, *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared*, London, J&P Knapton, 1749, Vol. 2, p.71. (I have used the modern spelling in this and subsequent quotes, instead of the original where 'P' was used for 's'.)

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p.72-73.

¹⁰¹ Howard-Browne, Rodney, *sermon*, "Signs and Wonders" Earls Court London, (07/12/95).

throughout the Philippines, Singapore, Russia and Africa after they received their own initial impartation at a series of Rodney's meetings in the United States.¹⁰²

In 1999, when Howard-Browne conducted a crusade in New York, David Wilkerson, Pastor of Times Square Church, launched a vitriolic attack on Howard-Browne and refused to allow people to advertise the Crusade near his church.¹⁰³

Closely associated with laughing is 'drunkenness' in the Holy Spirit. Both Jeremiah and the Disciples were described as drunk when they were clearly influenced by God rather than alcohol:

I am like a drunken man, like a man overcome by wine, because of the LORD and his holy words. (Jer.23:9.)

Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine." Then Peter... addressed the crowd: "...These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel." (Acts 2:12-16.)

Paul mentions being filled with the Holy Spirit in the same sentence as drunkenness, implying a similarity but also clearly contrasting the two conditions.

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord. (Eph.5:18-19.)

C 3 Change of countenance.

People in both the OT and NT experienced a change of countenance when they had a personal encounter with God.

Now if the ministry that brought death... came with glory... will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? (2 Cor.3:7-8.)

All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel. (Acts 6:15.)

There have been many recorded instances of people approaching death, either from natural causes or through persecution, who have had similar experiences. Eusebius writes of a servant girl called

¹⁰² Riss, Richard, <http://www.mantleofpraise.org/articles/overview.htm>, (17/03/03).

¹⁰³ From an audio tape circulated by Wilkerson to AOG ministers and a personal letter written to me from a member of my congregation assisting at the Crusade.

Blandina, who during was martyred at Lyons in France around AD177. During horrific persecutions, her countenance changed and the glory of Jesus Christ was seen on her:

But Blandina was suspended on a stake, and exposed to be devoured by the wild beasts who should attack her. And because she appeared as if hanging on a cross, and because of her earnest prayers, she inspired the combatants with great zeal. For they looked on her in her conflict, and beheld with their outward eyes, in the form of their sister, Him who was crucified for them, that He might persuade those who believe on Him, that every one who suffers for the glory of Christ has fellowship always with the living God.¹⁰⁴

C 4 Levitation.

Francis of Assisi established the Franciscan Order in 1209, after obtaining permission from Pope Innocent III (1196-1215). The Order was set up to follow the simple life of Jesus' itinerant ministry but soon became as static as the traditional Monastic Orders. To help keep alive the original vision of Francis, Ugolino of Montegiorgio wrote his biography called *Floretum* or 'Little Flower'. Although this book is full of incredulous stories, because it was written within twenty five years of Francis death and in the lifetime of his close friend and associate Leo, much of the basic content of the book is likely to contain facts. Francis is accredited with levitating under the Holy Spirit's influence:

On that same night also he was seen praying with arms outstretched in the form of a cross, and thus was he lifted up and suspended for a long time in the air, surrounded with a dazzling glory. And so, in these holy exercises, he passed all that night without sleeping.¹⁰⁵

St Francis... was sometimes so absorbed in God, that he was seen by his companions to be raised corporally above the ground... [Brother Leo] was permitted many times to behold him rapt in God and suspended above the earth, sometimes at the heights of three feet above the ground, sometimes four, sometimes raised as high as the top of the beach-trees, and sometimes exalted so high in the air, and surrounded with so dazzling a glory, that he could scarce endure to look upon him.¹⁰⁶

For many Evangelicals these experiences would be too fantastic to accept but an encounter with the

¹⁰⁴ Gwatkin, Henry M. (trans.), *Selections from Early Church Writers*, Eusebius, "The Persecution at Lyons and Vienne", London, Macmillan, 1929, p.75.

¹⁰⁵ Huddleston, Roger, (Trans.), *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis of Assisi*, New York, The Heritage Press, date unknown, published <http://www.byzantinefranciscans.org/flow.html>, (10/01/03), "Of the First Consideration of the Sacred Holy Stigmata", p.61.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p.63.

Holy Spirit may well suspend or even supersede the natural laws of creation. The accounts of levitation in Christian services in the C20th help make the C13th account of Francis much more plausible.

Woodworth-Etter had people levitate in her meetings:

They laid me on the floor. My body began to rock and my hands were waving in the air. I was all the time praising Jesus and felt myself going up. They told me afterwards that my body raised until they could see light under it.... Oh, such glory was around me until I thought I was almost in heaven, everything was so bright. I was singing the praises of God for two hours and a half.¹⁰⁷

The Lord wonderfully healed me when Sister Etter laid her hands on me and prayed for me... I was lifted right off my seat several feet in the air. To me it is a clear token of translation power.¹⁰⁸

C 5 Transportation.

Enoch and Elijah were taken to heaven without dying and after his resurrection, Jesus appeared and disappeared at will but there is only one mention in the Bible of divine transportation before death. Philip, in obedience to the Holy Spirit's prompting, went into the desert and met the Treasurer of Ethiopia. After explaining the Gospel to him, Philip water baptized him and God miraculously moved Philip to Azotus:

The Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and travelled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea. (Acts 8:39-40.)

However unusual this may seem, there have been other people who state that it has happened to them. David duPlessis, who was once greeted by Pope Paul VI as "So you are Mr Pentecost?"¹⁰⁹ was a Minister with the AFM in South Africa. After hearing God speak to him in Afrikaans that he was needed urgently at a certain house, he left two associates to come on at their own pace and started to run the mile or so journey. He appeared to reach his destination almost immediately and was able to

¹⁰⁷ Woodworth-Etter, op.cit. p.341.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p.355.

¹⁰⁹ duPlessis, D., (with Slosser, Bob), *A Man Called Mr Pentecost*, Plainfield, NJ, Logos International,

minister to an exceptionally desperate situation and release God's healing in time. Later the two associates arrived puzzled:

'We decided we'd walk on and... [found you] have been here twenty minutes! Impossible!' It was then that I realised I must have been transported by the Holy Spirit. Thank God for the Bible account of Philip (Acts 8:39-40). I would have been scared without that. As it was I was baffled.¹¹⁰

duPlessis mentions another case where the Holy Spirit transported a Basuto man about fifteen miles away in order to minister to the people and afterwards transported him back home. The Africans were so impressed that before long they began to worship the man and it ruined him. duPlessis pleaded for his acquaintances not to mention the event because he did not want "this little experience to ruin [him]."¹¹¹

D Miracles of Speech.

D 1 Tongues.

'Tongues' or *glossolalia* is defined as "the usually, but not exclusively, religious phenomenon of making sounds that constitute, or resemble, a language not known by the speaker."¹¹² Spittler states that 'tongues' are a "human phenomenon not limited to Christianity nor even to religious behaviour.... [but because the] phenomenon has a psychological explanation [that] does not exclude it from being a gift of the Spirit."¹¹³ Mormons, Buddhists American Indians and African tribal religions are among other groups who experience 'tongues'.¹¹⁴

The Bible has direct references to 'tongues' in Mark, Acts and Corinthians and implied references in other passages. The fact that the Church commenced with the use of 'tongues' shows their

1977, p.247.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. pp.85-87.

¹¹¹ Ibid. p.87.

¹¹² Spittler, "Glossolalia", *TNID of PCM*, op. cit. p.670.

¹¹³ Ibid. p.675.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. p.671.

importance in establishing Christianity, both in congregations and individuals:

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:4.)

When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. (Acts 19:6.)

Paul's instructions on 'tongues' show that he placed great value on their use within the Church: "Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?" (1Cor.12:30.) "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you... Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers." (1Cor.14:18-22.)

Chrysostom gives clear testimony to the use of 'tongues' in his time:

Whoever was baptized he straightway spake with tongues and not with tongues only, but many also prophesied, and some also performed many other wonderful works... [The Spirit] is invisible; therefore God's grace bestowed some sensible proof of that energy. And one straightway spake in the Persian, another in the Roman, another in the Indian, another in some other such tongue: and this made manifest to them that were without that it is the Spirit in the very person speaking.¹¹⁵

As quoted earlier, 'tongues' were experienced during the Reformation in Germany by the Anabaptists who were "excited by... glossolalia... and other manifestations of a camp-meeting revival."¹¹⁶

Although 'tongues' have been in use throughout Church history, it was not until the C20th that any doctrinal significance was given to them.

In December 1900, Parham urged his Bible students at Topeka, KA, to study the Scriptures for the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The students were convinced that 'speaking in tongues' was the initial physical evidence of the experience, citing Acts 2 as their authority.

Urging his students to study the Scriptures Parham left on a preaching trip to Kansas City. One of the students, Agnes Ozman, asked Parham to lay hands on her and pray that she would receive the Acts 2 experience. She later wrote, 'As hands were laid upon my head, the Holy Spirit fell upon me, and I began to speak in tongues, glorifying God. I talked several languages.'... Within a few days more than a dozen, including Parham, had spoken in tongues. The conclusion was that they

¹¹⁵ Chrysostom, op. cit. Vol. 12, Homily 29.

¹¹⁶ Williams, op. cit. p.134.

had been baptized in the Holy Spirit, just as the 120 experienced on the Day of Pentecost.¹¹⁷

Parham, together with many early Pentecostals believed that the gift of ‘tongues’ - *glossolalia* - was speaking actual languages that were unknown to the speaker - *xenoglossa*¹¹⁸ as on the first Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:7-12). McGee says that Parham himself spoke in several languages:

After the revival commenced on New Year's Day, he announced that the students had spoken many languages. He himself had received the capability of preaching in German and Swedish, Agnes Ozman in “Chinese,” and others in a variety of languages including Japanese, Hungarian, Syrian, Hindi, and Spanish. Parham noted that “cloven tongues of fire” appeared over the heads of speakers. Sometimes interpretations followed.”¹¹⁹

The press and local churches soon ridiculed Parham’s claim that God was restoring NT gifts and experiences, branding him as “fanatical, crazy over religion and even demon possessed.”¹²⁰ However his influence spread with spectacular results. Later, during a three-month crusade, there were “over 800 conversions, 1,000 testimonies of physical healing, and several hundred receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues.”¹²¹

McGee comments that although there was great emphasis on this ‘missionary gift’, there is no record of missionaries being sent overseas from Topeka.¹²² Other sources verify the use of *xenoglossa* – the “missionary gift of tongues” to enable the Gospel to be preached:

[She] would go into the Chinese laundries of Los Angeles and speak to the Chinese about God in their own language. They understood and would answer her... the Spirit gave her the correct words to say.¹²³

‘Tongues’ were experienced in the Welsh Revival under Even Roberts, but with Penn-Lewis’s

¹¹⁷ Warner, W., “The Birthplace of the Pentecostal Movement”, http://ag.org/top/2001counciltoday/20010807_01b_birthplace.cfm, (12/09/01).

¹¹⁸ Goff, op. cit. p.72.

¹¹⁹ McGee, G.B., “Tongues, The Bible Evidence (Part Two)” http://enrichmentjournal.org/enrichmentjournal/199903/068_tongues_2.cfm, (10/09/01).

¹²⁰ Warner, op. cit.

¹²¹ McGee, “Tongues, The Bible Evidence (Part Two)” op. cit.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ward-Heflin, E., *I Serve the God of Miracles*, Shippensburg, Destiny Image, 1991, pp.6-7.

influence, most supernatural events were thought to be counterfeit and accredited to the devil. This was probably the main reason why the Revival was short lived, although its influence was long-lasting. By placing much emphasis upon the devil and counterfeit experiences, Penn-Lewis manipulated Roberts and many others into fearing deception and thus shunning God's wonderful gifts.

A question arises here as to whether believers may now speak in unknown tongues, as the disciples did at the time of the Holy Spirit's infilling at Pentecost. There are those that say, Yes, but the truths set forth in preceding chapters, show that until the spiritual section of the Church of Christ are more acquainted with the counterfeiting methods of the spirits of evil, and the laws which give them power of working, any testimony to such experience as true, cannot be safely relied upon.¹²⁴

Twagirimana, mentioned earlier, is unable to speak English or French and needs a translator when ministering outside Rwanda. He states that when he met Jesus, he was given the gift of 'tongues' which operates when there is no translator available or if the translator is inaccurate. He preached in India using this 'gift of tongues' and over three thousand were converted and water-baptised in just one week.¹²⁵

This use of the 'gift of tongues' also happened twenty years ago to Michael Reid when he was in South America. On three separate occasions in three months, Reid thought he was speaking in English and his hearers thought he was speaking in Spanish during the meeting but afterwards both parties were unable to understand each other. In Argentina, one weekend, the local church grew from 200 to over 900 through the use of this gift.¹²⁶

E Miracles of Sensible Events.

E 1 Pictures on Walls.

Visible supernatural pictures from God have occurred at various times throughout recorded history.

In the OT, Belshazzar experienced God's visible warning of impending disaster:

¹²⁴ Penn-Lewis, J., *War on the Saints*, "Revival Library", (Ed. Cauchi, Tony), op. cit. Chapter XII.

¹²⁵ Twagirimana, Emmanuel, (Rubaduka, Enoch, interpreter) *interview*, personal, (21/11/01).

¹²⁶ Reid, Michael, *interview*, personal, (13/08/03).

Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall... “This is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN. (Dan.5:1-25.)

Far from being a fanciful story from the East used to embroider a patriotic passage, this event has some proven C20th parallels.

Ramabai Pandita (1858-1922) was an able scholar, fluent in Sanskrit, Kanarese, Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, English, Hebrew, and Greek. After becoming a Christian, she established several orphanages and a home for prostitutes in Mukti, western India. By 1905, evidence of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit was reported, with “several ‘slain in the Spirit’ and others experiencing a burning sensation... Numerous [other] miracles are attributed to Ramabai’s ministry, including finding locations for water wells in times of drought.”¹²⁷

In 1907 the move of the Holy Spirit increased, resulting in people jumping involuntarily for hours without feeling tired. About twenty young women went into a trance for hours – a few for four days. Also pictures appeared on the wall. They were in colour and animated with each picture depicting the life of Jesus Christ as described in the Gospels:

Each view would last from 2 - 10 minutes and then the light would gradually fade away, to reappear in a few moments with a new scene. These appeared for 12 hours and were not only seen by the native children of the orphanage and 8 missionaries, but by native Christians living near. Even heathens came to see the wonderful sight. These pictures were all depicting faithfully the Bible narration and were entirely supernatural.¹²⁸

These vision-pictures had a tremendous effect on softening people’s hearts towards the Gospel. Pandita’s associates faced criticisms over perceived emotional excesses but “given the international reputation of Ramabai... some observers accepted the phenomena at Mukti as genuine or politely restrained their comments.”¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Burgess, S., “Pentecostalism in India – an Overview”, *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, 4/1, 2001, p.89.

¹²⁸ Bartleman, F., *Another Wave Rolls In!*, Northridge, CA, Voice Christian Publications, 1970, p.42.

¹²⁹ McGee, Gary, “Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire! The Revival Legacy of Minnie F. Abrams”, *Enrichment Journal*, Summer 1998.

On Sunday 5th July 1914, whilst Stephen Jeffreys was preaching at Llanelli, South Wales, a picture of a lamb's head appeared on the wall behind him. Although he was unaware of the picture, Jeffreys knew that something remarkable was happening from the response of the congregation. His wife was unable to see the lamb but when it changed to the face of Jesus Christ, she and the rest of the congregation were able to see it clearly. The following description is by Jeffreys' son Edward, who was fourteen years old at the time and present at the meeting.

It had been described as a "Face beautiful beyond description, benevolent beyond words, the face of the 'Man of Sorrows'; and the eyes – kind, sad, glorious eyes – moved in the living face." It wasn't something which disappeared in a second – the vision remained on the wall for six hours. The lights were turned out, but still the vision could be seen. News of this strange appearance brought a great crowd of people in who had not attended the evening service. Infidels who came along out of mere curiosity were convinced by the evidence of their eyes and became converted...When hundreds of people - including infidels – all testify that they have really seen a vision on a wall which lasted for six hours, the evidence is too strong for refutation. No one who saw it ever had any doubt.¹³⁰

Jeffreys felt that this supernatural revelation of Jesus Christ as the 'Man of Sorrows' was a warning concerning the Great War, which broke out just one month after the vision appeared. The vision certainly made a profound impression on Jeffreys' life and ministry, and his son said that he "preached Christ as the only solution to all our problems with even greater power than ever before."¹³¹ The immediate result of this vision-picture was stimulation to talk about God's wonders and it did attract much publicity. There is little evidence of any long-term positive influence from this event (other than the people who witnessed it). Unfortunately some people put more value in the history of the picture than its source and refused to allow the room to be decorated, thus turning an event of holy awe into superstition.¹³²

Benny Hinn has also experienced a visible picture on the wall of his Church in Florida.¹³³

¹³⁰ Jeffreys, Edward, *Stephen Jeffreys the Beloved Evangelist*, London, Elim, 1946, p.11-12.

¹³¹ Ibid. p.12.

¹³² Cartwright, Desmond, *correspondence*, telephone, (22/11/02).

¹³³ Hinn, Benny, "This is your day" TV programme, 2000. (I have emailed him but as yet have not had any reply about this event.)

E 2 Lights and Sounds.

God has communicated with people throughout the Bible by visible lights and audible sounds. He caught Moses attention by speaking out of a 'Burning Bush': "So Moses thought, 'I will go over and see this strange sight - why the bush does not burn up.'" (Ex.3:3.) The Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt was also spectacular:

By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. (Ex.13:21-22.)

The giving of the Law to Moses on Sinai was very dramatic too:

Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently, and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him with thunder. (Ex.19:18-19.)

God did not restrict this spectacular form of communication to the OT. Jesus life and ministry included some very dramatic, though not so frightening, manifestations.

The Nativity was accompanied by supernatural signs which were seen and heard by those in the vicinity: "An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified." (Luke 2:9.) "The star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was." (Matt.2:9.)

At Jesus baptism, the Holy Spirit descended visibly as a dove and God spoke in an audible voice to those present: "And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'" (Matt.3:17.) God spoke again at Jesus transfiguration: "a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is my Son.'" (Matt.17:5.) The third record of God speaking audibly was just before Jesus was crucified:

Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.' The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, 'This voice was for your benefit, not mine.' (John 12:28-30.)

Although everyone was sure something unusual had happened, John was aware that not all recognised the sound as God's voice. Paul's conversion also involved the audible voice of Jesus. Again, those

present heard a sound but did not understand what was said:

suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' ...The men travelling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. (Acts 9:3-8.)

In 1999 God's audible voice was heard in a conference where Ruth Carneal was ministering in Australia. Two years before, she had collapsed at a funeral in Virginia and appeared dead:

I knew immediately that she was dead... they discovered that when she had gone to the rest room she had suffered a severe hemorrhage and lost fully a third of her blood. This had caused her to faint and die as she came out of the rest room.¹³⁴

Heflin believes there was a connection between Carneal's healing and this incident which occurred during a service in the Royal Theatre, New Castle, Australia:

He was saying, 'This will be a revival of signs. Thank me.' They all sat in amazement, seeing that no one was speaking into the microphones and realizing that they had heard the audible voice of the Lord. In describing His voice, they said it 'had fire on it.' Nothing will be impossible to us in the days ahead as we move further into River Glory.¹³⁵

Although many people claim to have heard God speak in an audible voice, very few bystanders have been able to hear it. This does not deny that their experience was genuine but shows that it was a very personal encounter. However, when visual lights occur, other people frequently see them.

The Roman Emperor Constantine personally recounted to Eusebius, the now famous story of a sign in the sky of a cross together with an inscription. The event took place in AD 312 as Constantine was marching against Maxentius¹³⁶ and was witnessed by the whole army who also witnessed the subsequent transformation of their leader.

About noon... he saw with his own eyes the trophy of a cross of light in the heavens, above the sun, and bearing the inscription, "Conquer by this". At this sight he himself was struck with amazement, and his whole army also, which followed him on this expedition, and witnessed the miracle... And while he continued to ponder and reason on its meaning, night suddenly came on; then in his sleep the Christ of God appeared to him with the same sign which he had seen in the

¹³⁴ Ward-Heflin, *River Glory*, op. cit. p.193.

¹³⁵ Ibid. p.193.

¹³⁶ Gwatkin, op. cit. Introductory notes, p.xxi.

heavens, and commanded him to make a likeness of that sign which he had seen in the heavens, and to use it as a safeguard in all engagements with his enemies.¹³⁷

During the Reformation in the C16th the Anabaptists were persecuted by both the Catholics and the Protestants. This made it very difficult for them to form a coherent, unified group and they easily capitulated to excesses of principle and practice. Also, because of their emphasis of maintaining a good conscience, they easily broke fellowship with others of similar doctrine. The following event took place in Holland during 1555. To escape persecution, the ‘Waterland brethren’ found it impossible to live in houses so they took to the fields and boats. Six of them were captured and taken to Amsterdam where they were sentenced to death. It was in the beginning of the winter and they were all strangled at the stake. There was freezing weather and remarkably, for thirteen weeks, a light like a candle stood over each stake to which the bodies were tied, and burned all night.

they saw the aforesaid light like a candle on the ice... The persons who saw all this, and did as has been stated with his body, were his chief brethren and associates; pious and credible persons, who related it to many, in order that this miracle should never be forgotten, but be remembered, to the edification of the pious.¹³⁸

Woodworth-Etter experienced heavenly-lights: “Bright lights were at times seen over the pulpit and over various people.”¹³⁹ On several occasions Branham was seen with a light over him and some of these lights were photographed. On one occasion, a heavenly light, like a blazing star, appeared above him at a baptism service. This was witnessed by the congregation of over four thousand from the bank of the Ohio River. Some ran for fear, while others shouted or fainted. A report of this unusual event appeared in the local newspaper shortly afterwards. It was also reported that a voice spoke from within the light, saying, “As John the Baptist was sent to forerun the first coming of the Lord, so you are sent to forerun His second coming.”¹⁴⁰

Norah Lam experienced heavenly lights as she faced execution in China: “light came down from the

¹³⁷ Eusebius, *The Life of Constantine*, “The Ages Digital Library”, op. cit. Book 1, Chap.28-29.

¹³⁸ Braght, Thieleman J., *Martyrs Mirror*, 1660, (Trans. Sohm, Joseph, 1886), p.569, published <http://homecomers.org/mirror/martyrsmirror1.zip> (12/10/02).

¹³⁹ Woodworth-Etter, op. cit. p.366.

¹⁴⁰ Strom, Andrew, *Great Healing Revivalist – How God’s Power Came*, 1996, “Revival Library”, op. cit.

sky and blinded [the firing squad] so they couldn't see. Bullets came out of the guns and [went] over her and under her but [did] not hit [her].”¹⁴¹

F Miracles of Created Objects.

Branham recalled an extraordinary experience he had in 1962 when three squirrels suddenly appeared at his command, which he then promptly shot. ¹⁴² In fact this episode of the creative word in the mouth of the ‘Prophet’ was not unique for Branham. He recalls several other occasions when God used his words as a catalyst for changing or creating circumstances. If anyone other than Branham had told this story it would be very difficult to believe but as Lindsay says:

The story of the life of William Branham is so out of this world and beyond the ordinary that were there not available a host of infallible proofs which document and attest its authenticity, one might well be excused for considering it far-fetched and incredible... The story of this prophet's life - for he is a prophet, though we infrequently use the term - indeed witnesses to the fact that Bible days are here again.¹⁴³

F 1 Food.

In both the OT and NT, large crowds were fed from very little.

For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah. (1Kings 17:16.)

“How can I set this [twenty loaves] before a hundred men?” ...But Elisha answered, “Give it to the people to eat. For this is what the LORD says: “They will eat and have some left over.” Then he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD. (2Kings 4:42-44.)

The number of those who ate [the five loaves of bread and two fish] was about five thousand men, besides women and children. (Matt.14:17-21.)

The number of those who ate [the seven loaves and the fish] was four thousand, besides women and children. (Matt 15:36-38.)

¹⁴¹ Lam, Norah, (with Hurrell, Irene B.), *China Cry*, London, Marshalls, 1983, pp.55-57.

¹⁴² Branham, op. cit.

¹⁴³ Lindsey, G., *William Branham, a Man Sent from God*, Dallas, TX, The Voice of Healing, 1950, p.9.

Pauline Edwards explains that in her early days in ministry, she experienced miraculous provision. She and a friend had four children each to feed and very little food - just enough ingredients for a small cake - which would certainly not satisfy eight hungry children!

But we prayed and agreed together that we were going to cook until the flour ran out. I said to my friend, 'You mix and I'll get the dishes ready,' and I kept giving her pans — as many as were in my cupboard. In fact there were 19 pans which made 19 big cakes! Now you can believe it or not, but I know this actually happened - that God multiplied the mixture through the working of miracles. But we had to start it off by acting in faith. Someone says, 'Why should God do that for you?' The simple answer is that he loves us just as much as he loved the multitude Jesus fed.¹⁴⁴

In a quite different tradition, God has performed creative miracles among the poor of El Paso-Juarez on the border of Mexico and Texas. In 1972, a charismatic RC prayer group, prompted by Jesus' command to share food with those in need, decided to provide a meal for the people who scavenged their living at the city dump. They prepared Christmas lunch for 150 people but over 300 turned up.

The food did not run out and there was enough left over to give to various orphanages on the way home! Laurentin, is convinced of the authenticity of this miracle and notes at least six other occasions when food was multiplied during the following decade.¹⁴⁵

F 2 Gold and precious stones.

Calvary Pentecostal Tabernacle, at Ashland, VA, USA has experienced miracles for many years. On Tuesday 27th July 1999 towards the end of the Camp-meeting service, 'gold-dust' started to rain down! A member of the CPT staff telephoned the Pastor of Mount Zion Fellowship in Jerusalem, who emailed me this testimony:

As we were praising the Lord, Janice began to shout 'the gold dust is falling!!' So, everyone on the platform began to look in the direction where she was at. As I looked, I literally saw the gold dust raining down. It was in an area of about 10 sq. ft. It rained for approximately 5 minutes... It was all over everyone!! It was all over my arms and dress. When I looked at everyone else, they were covered in the gold...

¹⁴⁴ Edwards, Pauline, "Live with Anointing - Part 4 Building God's Kingdom with Power", *Joy Magazine*, May 2003, pp. 36-38.

¹⁴⁵ Laurentin, op. cit. p.96.

It really brought an excitement like you would not believe.¹⁴⁶

This demonstration of God's glory provided an easy platform to preach from and when Bob Shattles gave an appeal to get right with God, about fifty people responded.

In 1997, Jane Lowder returned to CPT from Brazil having met Sylvania Machado and the next year invited Machado to their August Camp meeting. Machado had suffered over twelve years of illnesses including several cancers when God dramatically healed her. Since then she regularly exudes a large amount of 'gold dust' from her scalp during worship.¹⁴⁷ Some of the 'gold' has been analysed but the results are inconclusive. McDougal says this should not surprise us "after all, gold is an earthly element and this miraculous substance comes from heaven."¹⁴⁸ Heflin writes:

Just what is this golden glory? When it first appeared I called it 'gold dust' because it certainly looked like gold to me... Some call it 'glory dust.' Maybe we should call it 'heavenly dust'. I know that it is a miracle and I rejoice in it.¹⁴⁹

Gold teeth have also appeared, making media headlines such as "Holy Molars!"¹⁵⁰ Dye was so amazed at the divine dentistry he witnessed in Brazil that he took a British dentist with him to verify the miracles.¹⁵¹ I received a gold tooth from God in 2000 and it still glistens like new today. However divine dentistry is not especially new; Harold Beyers has a gold tooth "that the Lord gave him about 30 years ago."¹⁵² Some claims of 'gold teeth' have proved to be false when investigated, thus making the critics even more cynical but that does not invalidate the genuine cases. Dye's explanation of divine dentistry is God's sovereignty. However "if we over-emphasise his sovereignty, we can appear to suggest that he is a reluctant and begrudging healer rather than the greatest and most generous

¹⁴⁶ Bergen, Nancy, *correspondence*, email, (28/07/99).

¹⁴⁷ Ward-Heflin, Ruth, *Golden Glory*, Hagerstown, MD, McDougal Publishing, 2000, pp.16-18.

¹⁴⁸ McDougal, Harold, *Tokens of His Love*, Hagerstown, MD, McDougal Publishing, 2001, p.27.

¹⁴⁹ Ward-Heflin, *Golden Glory*, op. cit. p.13.

¹⁵⁰ Roberts, Glenys, "Holy Molars", *The Daily Mail*, June 14, 1999.

¹⁵¹ Dye, C., *Healing Anointing – Hope for a Hurting World*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1997, p.94.

¹⁵² "Beyer, Kaye, *correspondence*, email, (13/12/01).

physician of all.”¹⁵³

Along with the gold, ‘precious stones’ have also appeared supernaturally.

2nd August 2000. For the past two nights in the services, diamonds have been falling. On Sunday night about 8 diamonds were found and again last night about the same amount was found. It has been incredible. Sometime during praise and worship the diamonds come (how, I am not sure). I don't know if they just form on the ground or if they fall. [Someone took one] to Tompkins Jewellers to have it examined. The report was that it was covered in oil and it is a flawless diamond.

8th August 2000. There have been diamonds, emeralds, and sapphires just about every night. I have yet to see the sapphire but Jane has told me about it on several occasions. I am not sure if they are falling at the altar service or not but that is when people are still finding them. It is still happening.¹⁵⁴

A close friend of mine Angelo Parisi, had one of these ‘diamonds’ analysed in Eastwood, Nottingham where it “proved to be only zirconium not diamond.”¹⁵⁵ Zirconia is a white solid used in ceramic glazes and refractory coatings and “is an important artificial gemstone in single-crystal form.”¹⁵⁶ At the CPT Winter camp-meeting in February 2002 five ‘diamonds’ appeared on the carpet in front of the stage during worship. I was given one of them by Freda Smallwood who was present and it is perfectly crystalline in shape. A local jeweller’s analysis was “it was not diamond as it was too soft and had no natural flaws.”¹⁵⁷ The marvel of God’s miracle is far greater than the financial value of the ‘gold’ or ‘stones’, but unfortunately some put more attention on the ‘marvels’ than God himself.

F 3 Oil.

In A.A.Allen’s meetings, oil frequently exuded from people’ hands and feet. Heflin recalls attending Allen’s meeting in Pittsburgh and seeing an usher there with oil dripping from his palms: “He was not showing anyone. He was just leaning against the pole, weeping and expressing his love to Jesus.”¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Dye, op. cit. p.95.

¹⁵⁴ CPT, *correspondence*, email, (September 2000).

¹⁵⁵ Parisi, Angelo, *correspondence*, email, (08/10/01).

¹⁵⁶ “The New Oxford Dictionary of English”, op. cit.

¹⁵⁷ Simmonds Jewellers, High Street, Deal, Kent, (26/08/03).

¹⁵⁸ Ward-Heflin, *Golden Glory*, op. cit. p.193.

Don Double recalls that there were pictures of this phenomenon in Allen's magazine and also a telecast of a meeting where a person took off their shoes which were full of oil.¹⁵⁹ Double also saw this manifestation of oil on people's hands in Croydon and Bournemouth at meetings conducted by Peter Scothern.¹⁶⁰

Machado also exudes oil from her hands in great profusion during her personal devotions. She frequently bottles this oil and uses it for anoint the sick with dramatic results.¹⁶¹ This phenomenon also occurred at my Church in Deal in 2001, with oil 'bubbling' out of the palm of one person's hand. Another person took her shoe off because her foot felt damp and discovered her foot was wet with perfumed oil. In both these cases it was the atmosphere of God's presence that was far more important than the phenomenon that was occurring.

F 4 Perfume.

The OT Tabernacle and Temple rituals were typical of NT realities, which are fulfilled in Jesus Christ

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. (Col.2:16-17.)

God gave Moses very specific and detailed instructions on how to prepare Anointing oil:

Take the following fine spices: ... liquid myrrh ...fragrant cinnamon ...fragrant cane ...cassia... and ...olive oil. Make these into a sacred anointing oil, a fragrant blend, the work of a perfumer... It is sacred, and you are to consider it sacred. (Ex.30:23-32.)

It is quite reasonable, therefore, to expect God's presence to be experienced as a sweet perfume, especially as Solomon writes "Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out." (S.ofS.1:3.) Paul teaches that Christ has an aroma that is passed on to believers: "For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life." (2Cor.2:15-16.)

¹⁵⁹ Double, Don, *correspondence*, email, (22/11/02).

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ McDougal, *op. cit.* p.25

Throughout Church history, believers have been able to appreciate God's 'presence' or 'anointing' as a tangible experience like a sweet perfume. I first experienced this aroma in 1994 at Bridgwater. Our Church met in a room which had no outside windows. The service had finished when suddenly a sweet perfume was experienced for about fifteen minutes. With no one entering or leaving the room and the doors shut, it could only have come from within. There were two people attending the meeting who had experienced the 'perfume of God' before and explained the phenomena to me. Since then I have experienced this perfume several times. In January 2001 at my present Church in Deal, this perfume lingered in the building for over thirty-six hours after one meeting. On every occasion that I have experienced this perfume, there was also a very tangible presence of God which was also experienced by those present.

This phenomenon of perfume has been recorded by many others, including Bede. In the middle C7th Earcongota, daughter of the King of Kent, was a virtuous lady and had many miracles attributed to her. She knew by revelation that her death was imminent and spent her last few hours visiting the aged and infirm. Others in the monastery declared that they plainly heard concerts of angels singing. When they investigated the music, a great light was seen coming down from the sky. Three days after burying Earcongota, they decided to move her body:

[They took] up the stone that covered the grave, and to raise it higher in the same place, and while they did this, so great a fragrant of perfume rose from below that it seemed to all the brothers and sisters there present as if a store of the richest balsams had been opened.¹⁶²

Esubius describes the horrific persecution of Christians at Lyons, Gaul in AD177. Here in the midst of torture, God's presence could be clearly savoured:

For the joy of martyrdom, and the hope of the promises, and love for Christ, and the Spirit of the Father supported [them]. For [they] went out rejoicing, glory and grace being blended in their faces, so that even their bonds seemed like beautiful ornaments, as those of a bride adorned with variegated golden fringes; and they were perfumed with the sweet savor of Christ, so that some supposed they had been anointed with earthly ointment. The rest, beholding this, were strengthened, and when apprehended, they confessed without hesitation, paying no attention to

¹⁶² Bede, op. cit. Book III, Chap. 8.

the persuasions of the devil.¹⁶³

G Case study of Manna.

In 2001 I received emails from Germany and Israel describing the miracle of Manna appearing and then an AG Pastor told me the same story. Following up a contact, I was sent a photo of the manna and a first-hand description of this phenomenon:

Concerning the manna photo I sent to you I got in the mail from the Beyers. Where I first saw and ate it was at CPT in Ashland, Va. Sept 21, '01. It was white (not yellowish, as the picture shows), sorta (sic) like pieces of cracker, yet not crackers - it tasted a little salty, yet a little sweet - but, Oh, so HOLY!!! I'm shaking as I write this!!¹⁶⁴

Further research entailed corresponding with Harold and Kaye Beyer and discovering their story. Kaye said that the Lord first sent manna over thirty years ago but they did not make a note of the exact date. Whilst Harold was driving a milk truck in Wisconsin, God's presence was very tangible and he discovered 'this white stuff' all over his lap. When he left the truck, it disappeared and then reappeared when he returned to the cab. So he asked the Lord 'what is this?' The Lord spoke to him and said that it was manna and that if he served him he would see lots of signs and miracles that many people have not seen. ('Manna' in Hebrew means 'what is it?')

The Beyer's did not tell anyone because they did not expect to be believed but six months later the manna came on Harold's bible as he was praying. It lasted a day and a night and they showed some close friends. It reappeared about once a year until 1998 when it came twice. In 2000 the manna started to come more often. Kaye Beyer writes:

Could tell you many, many testimonies of the different times that it has come but that would take pages. But every time it's like the first time, we never take it for granted. The presences of the Lord is so awesome when He sends it that you just want to weep or some just shout and praise the Lord too.¹⁶⁵

The Bible records that God provided manna for the Israelites over the forty years they were

¹⁶³ Eusebius, "The Church History of Eusebius", *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, "The Ages Digital Library", op. cit. Vol.1, Book 5, Chap.1.

¹⁶⁴ Colver, Jan, *correspondence*, email, (19/11/01).

¹⁶⁵ Beyer, Kaye, *correspondence*, email, (13/12/01).

wandering in the desert, between leaving Egypt and entering into the Promised Land

Then the LORD said... “I will rain down bread from heaven for you...When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, "What is it?" ...[They] called the bread manna. It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey... The Israelites ate manna for forty years, until they came to a land that was settled; they ate manna until they reached the border of Canaan. (Ex.16:4-35.)

When the manna stopped appearing, a sample remained in the Ark of the Covenant: “Aaron put the manna in front of the Testimony, that it might be kept.” (Ex.16:34.) “This ark contained the gold jar of manna.” (Heb.9:4.) The Ark, together with the manna disappeared when the Temple was destroyed at the Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C. This means that manna has probably been away from any human contact since that time until now, 2587 years later! The Beyers said they have not heard of manna appearing anywhere else:

Other than when we are at a church the manna has a few times come on the pastor's Bible and while we were in Norway the Lord put the manna on the lady's Bible in the home we were staying at... so other than that I don't know of [it occurring elsewhere].¹⁶⁶

Another fascinating aspect to this appearance of manna is that there is enough for everyone present to taste it. At the Beyer's visit to Pastor Burton's Church in Washington DC in February 2002, at least 200 people were worshipping, “but the Lord had sent enough manna for everyone to have a piece.”¹⁶⁷ Similarly in Jerusalem in 2001: “There was just enough manna for everyone in the service to take a piece.”¹⁶⁸

Healings are also common when the manna is experienced, which may well explain why the Israelites had no sick or feeble among them during the forty years of manna after they left Egypt. “He brought out Israel, laden with silver and gold, and from among their tribes no-one faltered.” (Ps.105:37.)

He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. (Deut.8:3-4.)

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. (05/11/02).

¹⁶⁷ Beyer, Harold, <http://wecareforyou.homestead.com>, March 2002 Newsletter, (08/04/03).

¹⁶⁸ Wilson, Bill, <http://www.revivalglory.com>, November 2001 Newsletter, (28/10/02).

God has brought instant healings from blindness, deafness, paralysis, etc., when people take one small piece of the manna:

Saturday night Harold was coming inside the gate of the property and suddenly, the glory of God fell upon him and the manna fell directly upon the top of his Bible. Again, there was just enough manna for each person in the service... There were many healings in the services; two women each had lumps in their breasts which disappeared; another woman had a lump in her side which disappeared; another had severe depression which lifted. There were other testimonies, equally as significant.¹⁶⁹

With the manna, comes a great awareness of God's glory: "Harold watched manna form only an inch above his hand; and then it dropped into his hand. Harold was struck with the glory of the Lord so heavily that he needed to lean against a wall just to remain on his feet. This was a most special time for us."¹⁷⁰

Wilson writes that all God was doing was so far beyond the comprehension of men, no human mind could ever comprehend it:

The Lord also gave us a word in which He said it was a day for Selahs. It was a time to ponder Him, not the manifestations He was bringing into the earth, but just Him... Even more than the manifestation of the manna, though, is the glory of God that comes with it. Every time He poured it out, we could hardly stand, for His presence in our midst. We are truly living in days of awe and we know what He is doing is beyond man's perception. What a blessing to live in such a day!¹⁷¹

Although this manna is unique, it is the awareness of God and his glory that accompanies it that makes it so special. However, it is Jesus who is the true "bread of life":

I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. (John 6:47-51.)

For believers who overcome, God promises manna – the spiritual manna of Jesus – to enjoy:

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone

¹⁶⁹ Beyer, Harold, op. cit, November 16 2001 Newsletter, (08/04/03).

¹⁷⁰ Wilson, op. cit.

¹⁷¹ Wilson, op. cit.

with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it. (Rev.2:17.)

Conclusion.

The human body is ‘wonderfully made’ (Psalms 139:14) and has incredible capacity to heal itself but resentment, unforgiveness, bitterness, stress etc. often hinders this. Once these obstacles are removed, the body often recovers from real sicknesses without a direct intervention from God. I believe this explains many documented ‘miraculous healings’ at shrines like Lourdes. It may also explain many of the miracles at Healing Crusades, but it does not explain creative miracles. Laurentin writes that the real miracle at El-Paso was not the multiplication of food but the faith that it produced.¹⁷² So with Jesus first Disciples “This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.” (John 2:11.) However as Canty explains, the effects of healings vary:

Pioneering a new church a blind girl received perfect sight on the first night, and the effect was more negative than positive, apparently stimulating annoyance at such Divine compulsive evidence, or else that we were queer folk to have such power. Some argue that if it was God doing the healings everybody would be healed – popular excuses not to believe do take a strange turn Healing on the whole convince people but not about the Gospel. They become believers, but only believers in healing, or an evangelist – as in Jn.2. They believed in Jesus but only as a wonder worker. The same applies to other gifts.¹⁷³

In the OT, miracles declared God’s glory but failed to produce faith in those who saw them and who were sustained miraculously for forty years: “For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.” (Heb.4:1-2.) It was the same in the NT: “Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him.” (Jn.12:37.)

Frodsham discovered that even the experience of returning from the grave was not enough to convert some!

When we arrived we found the man had been dead for half an hour, and his mother

¹⁷² Laurentin, op. cit. p. 32.

¹⁷³ Canty, George, *correspondence*, letter (22/11/02).

and family were gathered around him, weeping with despair. I have never seen a more horrible spectacle. Never had I prayed a prayer such as I then uttered, moved by the Holy Spirit. God gave me such a faith that I saw the man revive and live. When he returned to life I said to him, 'Brother, you were going to hell.' 'Yes,' he said, 'I was going down, down, to a great abyss of darkness and heat, but before I reached the place where I was going I was detained, and opening my eyes I found myself here.' ...He is still living, but afar from God."¹⁷⁴

Christianity is more than doctrine; it is power – “power to transform our lives.”¹⁷⁵ Lake explains it this way: “Christianity is one hundred percent supernatural – God possessing man.”¹⁷⁶ God is not a magician. Nor does he do man’s work for him but “only adds the finishing touch to his effort.”¹⁷⁷ Edwards understood that miracles result from an intimate relationship with God. The following is his synopsis of the Pentecostal movement and hence miracle ministries:

[It is] typified by its fantasy facts, its holler power, its science fiction miracles, and its hallucination statistics. The rest of Christendom smiled at their dream world and delightful delirium. But somewhere down there in their private Disneyland there was a spark of the divine element. That tiny touch with the divine is what provided their ‘first motion’ impetus.¹⁷⁸

The Christian’s faith is in God, not his miracles which are signposts pointing to the Miracle-Maker. It is our faith that pleases God (Heb.11:6) not the miracles. Miracles follow and confirm the preaching of God’s word (Mk.16:18-20). However, miracles do help people to believe:

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30-31.)

The AG’s caution of spectacular signs given in 2000, appears reminiscent of their critics last century!

We must admit that an omnipotent God could place gold fillings in teeth and gold dust on individuals. But can such events be empirically demonstrated? If it is for a sign to those present, the reason for the sign should be evident. But to run after such signs and wonders makes us little more than the Pharisees who came to Jesus

¹⁷⁴ Frodsham, Stanley, “Raised from the Dead”, *Pentecostal Evangel*, January 26 1935, p.6.

¹⁷⁵ MacNutt, op. cit. p.95.

¹⁷⁶ Copeland, G., (ed.) *John G. Lake*, Fort Worth, TX, KCP, 1994, p.432.

¹⁷⁷ Laurentin, op. cit. p.68.

¹⁷⁸ Edwards, Gene, “An Open Letter To House Church Leaders”, published <http://www.fbhweb.org/books/OpenLetter.pdf>, (20/05/03).

asking to see a sign from heaven (Mark 8:11). The same attitude should guard believers, no matter what the unnatural sign might be. Judging from a distance on the basis of secondhand reports is dangerous.¹⁷⁹

However they are right to express concern over ‘extra-biblical excess’ and wrong teaching. We need discernment, not so much on the labels and names but on the actual teachings and human responses.

Reports of souls saved and lives changed should never justify wrong theology and practices. Yet Paul said... ‘Christ is proclaimed in every way whether out of false motives or true; and in that I rejoice’ (Phil.1:15-18). But Paul obviously wanted Christ to be proclaimed from right motives and with biblical integrity. So do we... Unconfirmed reports of unbelievable happenings in revival services discredit rather than advance the cause of Christ. Throughout the New Testament physical healings were the supernatural evidences of God’s presence and working.¹⁸⁰

Miracles are a means of blessing in themselves especially healing, protection and provision. They are also “tokens of God’s love”:

God loves us so much that he desires to give us visible signs of His love, something that not only we can see, but something that everyone around us can see as well. He wants to extend to us visible symbols of His favour upon our lives, *Tokens of His Love*. (Author’s emphasis.)¹⁸¹

I challenge each of you to open up yourself to the visible manifestations of God’s glory and presence... Let everyone around you know you are the wonder of our God. This will not indicate in any way, that you are better than someone else... It will simply mean that God loves you and he wants the whole world to know it.¹⁸²

Miracles are also tools for evangelism: “An important principle seems to be illustrated here that the gifts of healing and of working of miracles have their true sphere in evangelism rather than among the saints.”¹⁸³

When Douglas Scott faced great opposition to his message in France, the evidence that God exists and does answer prayer was the miracles and supernatural gifts.

It can also produce the same effects as the preaching of the Apostles produced in

¹⁷⁹ “Endtime Revival – Spirit-Led and Spirit-Controlled”, <http://www.ag.org/beliefs>, As adopted by General Presbytery, The General Council of the Assemblies of God, August 11, 2000, (10/10/02).

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ McDougal, op. cit. p.12

¹⁸² Ibid. p.192.

¹⁸³ Gee, Donald, *Trophimus I Left Sick*, London, Elim, 1952, p.9.

the first century, with the same miracles and conversions, and other manifestations of the Spirit of God thus proving without a doubt that it is, the Pentecostal movement that is the continuation of the primitive church.¹⁸⁴

Although the Holy Spirit baptism gives us power to be Jesus witnesses (Acts 1:8) many Christians struggle with evangelism. In the Churches I have pastored I have found that those who receive miracles from God find it difficult not to be a witness – they want to talk about God’s love. Although the greatest miracle is conversion, the new birth is unseen and can appear ethereal. Tangible miracles are visible to others and wonderful conversation openers. After all who can keep quiet about a miraculous healing or provision including a gold tooth given to them personally by God!

[Miraculous manifestations] makes people excited about going to Church, excited about sharing their faith, and excited about growing in faith so that they can do more for the Lord who obviously loves them so much.¹⁸⁵

God wants people to see his glory and miracles: “When God gives us signs and wonders, we must not hide them. They are for people to see.”¹⁸⁶ The Message translation puts it this way: “We are guides into God's most sublime secrets, not security guards posted to protect them.” (1Cor.4:1 TM.) God freely loves us and has promised to graciously give us all things (Rom.8:32). Miracles are not a sign of maturity nor of perfection – they simply display God’s glory and love. “You don’t have to be a perfect person before God will shower you with *Tokens of His Love*.” (Author’s emphasis.)¹⁸⁷

Miracles are tokens of God’s love. They should make one ‘feel good’ about oneself and also ‘feel good’ about God too. The assurance that God is personally interested in you and loves you, will build faith and increase one’s self-value. Miracles are thus a major contribution to developing faith in believers and to their sharing that faith with others.

¹⁸⁴ Scott, Douglas, “The Pentecostal Movement in France”, Pentecostal Evangel, January 26 1935, p.1.

¹⁸⁵ Ward-Heflin, *Golden Glory*, op. cit. p.212.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. p.238.

¹⁸⁷ McDougal, op. cit. p.80.

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Abbreviations.

AFM = Apostolic Faith Mission.

AOG = Assemblies of God (UK).

AG = Assemblies of God (USA).

AV = Authorised Version of the Bible.

C19th = Nineteenth Century (or other number as relevant).

CPT = Calvary Pentecostal Tabernacle.

NT = New Testament.

OT = Old Testament.

RC = Roman Catholic.

TM = The Message Bible.

TNIDofPCM = The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal Charismatic and Movements.

UK = United Kingdom.