

**"THE CHARISMATICS AND THE WORD
FAITH MOVEMENT"
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II. SOME OF THE ACCOMMODATING THINGS OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

A. Disregard for doctrine

Charismatics have little or no regard for the doctrinal truths of the Bible. It is not a question of what does the Word of God say, but have you had an "experience" which may be related to the work of the Holy Spirit?

This kind of attitude toward the Word of God not only places one's "experience" above what God says, it is also contradictory to what believers are called upon to do. It also runs contrary to the practices of faithful believers who have contended for the faith down through the ages.

Notice believers are called upon to search the Scriptures concerning what is preached (Acts 17:11). The apostle Paul exhorted Timothy to take heed to the doctrine (I Tim. 4:16). He also rebuked those who were doctrinally unsound (Phil. 4:2,3; I Tim. 1:20; II Tim. 2:17).

John MacArthur has stated an important point concerning disregard for doctrine:

Love apart from truth is nothing more than hypocritical sentimentality. The Biblical challenge is not to avoid truth that is controversial, but to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15) (MacArthur, 15).

B. Spirit of Eccumenicity

The Charismatics have one thing in common and that is some "experience" which they relate to the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit baptism is evidenced by speaking in tongues or the manifestation of some other charismatic gift.

Since the Charismatics hold experience above what the Word of God says, and are indifferent to doctrinal truths, this has led them to cross all denominational barriers and open their doors to all who embrace some manifestation of the charismatic gifts.

John MacArthur recounts how the Charismatics crossed denominational lines:

Also known as "Neo-Pentecostalism," the charismatic movement is heir to Pentecostalism which began around 1900. Until 1959 Pentecostalism was contained in denominations such as Assemblies of God, Foursquare Gospel Churches, and the United Pentecostal Church. But in 1959 Pentecostalism spilled over denominational lines when Dennis Bennett, rector at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California, experienced what he believes was the baptism of the Holy

Spirit and the gift of tongues. After that, as John Sherrill put it, the walls came tumbling down. The Charismatic Movement spread to the Episcopalian, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Lutheran denominations. From there it has swollen to encompass Catholics, theological liberals, and even pseudo-Christian fringe groups (MacArthur, 20,21).

As a result of embracing others on the basis of their "experience," and not doctrine, the Charismatics have been able to do what all the efforts of the ecumenical movement could not accomplish.

Is this "experience" of speaking in tongues an expression of the Holy Spirit's work to unite all believers with no regard for doctrine? This writer has pointed out that the tongues phenomenon has even occurred among non-christian groups:

Tongues-speaking has been heard among Muslims, Mormons, and spiritual mediums. Unitarian Pentecostals, rejecting the deity of Christ, talk in tongues. Since it can be done by non-christians, tongues-speaking cannot be the sure sign of one's faith in Christ, much less of the baptism of the Spirit. The reader should recognize the weighty significance in this foregoing fact. If tongues-speaking is something characteristic of heathen and anti-christian groups, how then can it be of the God of the Bible. This seems to indicate rather that it is of the god of this world (Jones, 42).

C. Use of Celebrities

The charismatics have used numerous Hollywood celebrities in their television broadcasts and meetings to further their movement. The criterion for an appearance seems to be any kind of religious experience that savors of the supernatural.

Godly believers, who live a separated life in obedience to God's Word, should note two things in regard to the use of Hollywood personalities. First of all, just because some experience is supernatural doesn't mean it is of God. The devil does supernatural things.

Secondly, when God saves a person He saves him out of sin, and not to live in sin. And Hollywood has rightly been called sin-city and still is despite present-day views regarding sex, nudity, and fashions. Christians are called unto a holy calling and taught by the Holy Spirit to live a separated life (Titus 2:11-14).