

Friday, September 9, 2022

Pros & Cons

1 Corinthians 14:40, pg. 961. Read, Pray

Intro; **The Pros & Cons of the Charismatic/Pentecostal Movement.**

What's the difference? In belief of the gifts, they are mostly the same, generally speaking. *"The main difference between them is that Pentecostals have their own denominations and churches, while charismatics belong to historic denominations."*¹

Assembly of God, established in 1914², would be known as Pentecostal, whereas Baptists, being established in 1607, can be Charismatic Baptists, or you could say, Charismatic Catholics, Charismatic Lutherans, etc. Basically when a historic denomination experiences some "crazy stuff," the word Charismatic gets inserted, whereas Pentecostals have their own churches.

Why the distinctions? If the gifts are biblical, why would you need an extra adjective to describe what kind of church you are... Wouldn't it just be Christian? Let's talk history... Specifically Church History.

Prophecy, tongues, healings and miracles are the ones up for debate. No one is writing books about whether or no the gift of Mercy, Helps, Teaching, or Administration ever ceased.

Terms

Cessationism; a doctrine that spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues, prophecy and healing ceased with the Apostolic Age.

¹ <https://christianityfaq.com/pentecostal-charismatic-differences/>

² <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Assemblies-of-God#:~:text=It%20was%20formed%20by%20a,of%20Congregational%20and%20Presbyterian%20elements.>

Continuationism; the belief that all the spiritual gifts, including healings, tongues, Prophecy, and miracles, are still in operation today

The reason why these terms are out there is because they describe a belief system, which is not a bad thing. AND, it's important to recognize, these distinctions are not primary to the christian faith. In other words, you can hold to either and still go to heaven. I love and respect theologians, scholars, and fellow Pastors on both sides of this issue. To say that a cessationist is barely a christian, or a continuationist is crazy & mislead is short-sighted at best.

For example, after spending 3 chapters making major distinctions and corrections of the why, what and how of Spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-14, The Apostle Paul re-centers us by saying this right after our text.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:40-15:4 "FIRST IMPORTANCE"

Do you think Church History supports Cessationism or Continuationism?

Cessationism is the predominate doctrine. Tongues mostly, but prophecy as well, are mentioned throughout church history, yet it is sparse. This is a major argument for the cessationist. That said, doctrines like justification by faith alone, a primary teaching of scripture for salvation, was lost for approx. 1200 yrs. as the Catholic Church took the reigns, so saying that it's not a major part of our history as an argument for why something is not true, or no longer exists, is not one to hang your hat on.

The history of gifts being used in the local church other than the first 2-3 centuries is rather recent, becoming predominant with the Azusa St. Revival in 1906, the Assembly of God denomination in 1914, and the Charismatic Movement thereafter.

-What can we conclude about Church History?

This can either discourage you or encourage you. Based on Church History, it might give you caution to our current Charismatic Movement OR you could say, What a time to be Christian!

Read David Hockings Conclusions.

"From this brief overview, we see that the use of Spiritual Gifts declines when the role of the lay persons is reduced" David Hocking, *Spiritual Gifts*

"The final criteria for deciding whether God wants to bestow certain spiritual gifts on his people today is the Word of God" Sam Storms, *Understanding Spiritual Gifts*.

So, if God decides to bless our church, to restore us to a bible focused & Spirit filled church, we will follow the scriptures.

Read 1 Cor. 14:40

Next week we will look at Pros and Cons part 2. If you would like to look over the list created by JI Packer, they will be on our website under "Sermon Notes" located after today's notes. The week after, we start defining each gift starting with, "What is New Testament Prophecy"

Last week we ended with this verse,

What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. 1 Corinthians 14:26

And I said I would create some space to do that. So before we worship in song and take communion, does anyone have a word for the building up of our church today? Let's Testify

Communion

Offering & Announcements

-Connect Sunday

-Hope Refuge, mention plans for Christmas!

-Prayer,

Blessing

Next weeks "Pros & Cons" part 2

Jl Packer in his book, *"Keep in Step with the Spirit"* has a list of Pros & Cons of this recent movement. Thomas Schreiner added some thoughts in his book, *"Spiritual Gifts; What are they and why they matter."*

PROS

1. "Spirit-Empowered Living. Emphasis is laid on the need to be filled with the Spirit and to be living a life that one way or another displays the Spirit's power," Sometimes we as evangelicals tend to ignore the Holy Spirit, and charismatics remind us about the third person of the Trinity and the need to be filled with the Spirit.

2. "Emotion Finding Expression. There is an emotional element in the makeup of each human individual, which calls to be expressed in any genuine appreciation and welcoming of another's love, whether it be the love of a friend or a spouse or the love of God in Christ. Charismatics understand this, and their provision for exuberance of sight, sound and movement in corporate worship caters to it." Right doctrine is important, but so is our experience with God. Sometimes we stress right thinking but neglect other dimensions of what it means to be human.

3. "Prayerfulness. Charismatics stress the need to cultivate an ardent, constant, wholehearted habit of prayer," How crucial as Christians it is to be in

communion with God, and charismatics remind us of our personal relationship with God.

4. "Every-Heart Involvement in the Worship of God. Charismatics ... insist that all Christians must be personally active in the church's worship." Worship isn't the exclusive province of leaders, and charismatics rightly stress every-member worship. The body as a whole ministers to itself, and charismatics capture this biblical truth.

5. "Missionary Zeal." Charismatics long to see others converted and saved to the ends of the earth. The Pentecostal/charismatic movement is worldwide the largest Christian movement.

6. "Small-Group Ministry. Like John Wesley, who organized the Methodist Societies round the weekly class meeting of twelve members under their class leader, charismatics know the potential of group." The usefulness of smaller group meetings has been recognized by believers, as small group ministry has expanded.

7. "Communal Living." Charismatics extend the sense of family in churches.

8. "Joyfulness. At the risk of sounding naïve, Pollyannaish and smug, they insist that Christians should rejoice and praise God at all times and in all places, and their commitment to joy is often writ large on their faces, just as it shines bright in their behavior." There is an openness to the Spirit and childlike trust, joy and humility, which is refreshing in this cynical world.

9. Real Belief in Satan and the Demonic. Many Christians say they believe in Satan, but charismatics take the demonic seriously.

10. Real Belief in the Miraculous. We still believe that God can do miracles, but sometimes we live like Deists, as if God weren't active at all in the world. Charismatics don't make that mistake.

Cons

1. "Elitism. In any movement in which significant-seeming things go on, the sense of being a spiritual aristocracy, the feeling that 'we are the people who really count,' always threatens at gut level, and verbal disclaimers of this syndrome do not always suffice to keep it at bay." Interestingly, this is the same problem we see in 1 Corinthians where those who spoke in tongues saw themselves as spiritually superior.

2. "Sectarianism. The absorbing intensity of charismatic fellowship, countrywide and worldwide, can produce a damaging insularity whereby charismatics limit themselves to reading charismatic books, hearing charismatic speakers, fellowshiping with other charismatics and backing charismatic causes." Charismatics are sometimes incredibly narrow so that there is little willingness to learn from other branches of Christendom.

3. "Anti-intellectualism. Charismatic preoccupation with experience observably inhibits the long, hard theological and ethical reflection for which the New Testament letters so plainly calls." The emphasis on emotions can slight and denigrate the importance of careful thought. Careful interpretation of Scripture and orthodox theology are too often ignored. In scholarly charismatic circles the inerrancy of Scripture is denied quite often, and in popular circles people may rely on revelations from God for their daily life, in effect denying the sufficiency of Scripture.

4. "Illuminism. Sincere but deluded claims to direct divine revelation have been made in the church since the days of the Colossians heretic(s) and the Gnosticizers whose defection called forth 1 John, and since Satan keeps pace

with God, they will no doubt recur till the Lord returns. At this point the charismatic movement, with its stress on the Spirit's personal leading and the revival of revelations via prophecy, is clearly vulnerable." Some claim God speaks directly to them, and they aren't open to any correction or questioning of such claims. The focus on contemporary revelation may compromise or even contradict the teaching of Scripture.

5. "Charismania. This is Edward D. O'Connor's word for the habit of mind that measures spiritual health, growth, and maturity by the number and impressiveness of people's gifts, and spiritual power by public charismatic manifestation." In practice 1 Corinthians 13—where our spiritual life is measured by our love for others—may be ignored.

6. "Super-supernaturalism. Charismatic thinking tends to treat glossolalia in which the mind and tongue are deliberately and systematically disassociated, as the paradigm case of spiritual activity, and to expect all God's work in and around his children to involve similar discontinuity with the ordinary regularities of the created world." Most of life is lived in the ordinary. We don't live miracle-a-minute lives. The most important moments in our lives are often invisible to others and even to us.

7. "Eudaemonism. I use this word for the belief that God means to spend our time in this fallen world feeling well and in a state of euphoria based on that fact. Charismatics might deprecate so stark a statement, but the regular and expected projection of euphoria from their platforms and pulpits, plus their standard theology of healing, show that the assumption is there." Many charismatics (though not all!) throughout the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Charismatic Movement world espouse the health and wealth gospel, and it is clearly the most popular false gospel in the world. When we read the New Testament, it is apparent that God often calls upon his people to suffer, and the role of suffering in the Christian life is often neglected among charismatics.

8. "Demon Obsession." Some see demons everywhere, and identify every sin with a demon. Also, the emphasis on "territorial spirits" in some circles is off-center and often quite speculative.

9. "Conformism. Peer pressure to perform (hands raised, hands outstretched, glossolalia, prophecy) is strong in charismatic circles." People may feel compelled to have the same spiritual experiences, and we may measure how spiritual someone is by the emotions expressed or by physical movements.

10. Experience Centered. A danger in the charismatic movement and in evangelicalism generally is a focus on experience so that experience takes precedence over and trumps Scripture. Powerful experiences of God are a gift of God, but Scripture must play a foundational role so that experience is not accepted as self-authenticating. Experience is subordinate to Scripture so that experiences do not become the arbiter of what is permitted. Instead, Scripture is the final authority and experiences are only to be accepted if they accord with Scripture.