

**THE
NEW RELIGIOUS
MOVEMENTS:**

**Pentecostalism
In
Perspective**

Proceedings of the 21st Conference
of the Catholic Theological
Association of Nigeria

Edited by
Amuluche Greg. Nnamani

One of the major developments that greeted the beginning of the 20th century was the emergence of New Religions Movements. The Movements have been growing in various forms since then, and have now assumed an unmistakable global status, threatening to overtake the Mainline Churches in population, strength and significance. In Africa, the New Religious Movements have been very conspicuous, particularly because it has been thriving in all its various forms and shapes. The articles in this volume address in particular the phenomenon of Pentecostalism as the most dominant expression of these Movements in our time. The problems it poses and the prospects it holds out for the Church are seen as challenges to all Christians.

The Editor

Amuluche Greg Nnamani did post-graduate studies in pastoral psychology and read for a doctorate degree in systematic theology in Austria and Germany. He currently lectures in Systematic Theology and Psychology at the Seminary of All Saints, Uhiele, Ekpoma, Edo State. He is also the Head of Department of Theology.



978 - 8028 - 41 - 1

AVA PUBLISHERS
2A Dawson Road, Benin City,
Edo State, Nigeria.

THE PENTECOSTAL PHENOMENON IN THE CHURCH AND THE CORINTHIAN HERMENEUTIC (1 Cor 12-14)

Sr. Mary-Sylvia Nwachukwu, DDL

1. Introduction

This paper addresses itself to the phenomenon of Pentecostalism in the Church. The word 'Pentecostal' derives from the word 'Pentecost', an originally Jewish festival in which the first fruits of barley and wheat harvest were presented to God (Num 28:26). Later, the feast also came to celebrate the historical event of the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. Pentecost derives from the Greek word *pentecosth.*, meaning the fiftieth day - after the feast of Passover (Lev 23:15f). According to Acts 2, this was the feast which the apostles and other believers gathered to celebrate, and during which event, the Holy Spirit descended on them in the form of tongues of fire (vv9-11). The timid and frightened apostles were empowered by the Holy Spirit to courageously address the gospel message to all nations and to be understood by them. All this happened in fulfilment of the promise of Jesus to his apostles (Acts 1:4-8): "...you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. The Pentecost is celebrated in Christendom as the great anniversary of the beginning of the Church. Besides this description of the earliest Jerusalem Church, the atmosphere of charismatic operations was characteristic of the Churches of Pauline foundation (for instance, 1 Cor 12-14; Gal 3:2). Many New Testament texts, and especially the letters of Paul, signal the importance of the Holy Spirit for the living of Christian life. Paul describes Christian life as 'life in the Spirit' (Rom 8:5; Gal 5:25), 'to walk in the Spirit' (Rom 8:4), 'to be in the Spirit' (Rom 8:9) or 'to be led by the Spirit' (Rom 8:14; Gal 5:18).

In the early 1900s, the desire of some Christians to introduce a revival within main-line churches, born out of this experience of special powers through the Spirit, generated an outbreak of a movement within Christendom that is known as the Pentecostal movement. After several years of struggle for discernment and understanding, there remains today in main line churches what we call the 'charismatic renewal', which is changing the face of the Church.¹ The movement sprang up (Founder: C.F. Parham in Kansas - USA) with the conviction that all Christian experience must begin like that of the

first disciples with a baptism in the Spirit, which should lead to effective witness to Christ and a display of charismatic gifts.² For them, the surest sign of this baptism in the Spirit is the gift of tongues. This is the charismatic phenomenon that is sometimes known as *zenolalia* (*zenon* = foreign; *lalein* = to speak), that is, to speak a foreign language or *glossolalia* (*glossa* = tongue; *lalein* = to speak), meaning, to speak in tongue. Since the terms 'Pentecostal' and 'charismatic' are associated, there has been an erroneous appropriation of the term 'charismatic' by members of the Pentecostal movement, a term which they deny every other Christian. In modern day parlance, the term 'charismatic' has come to refer more to the religious frenzy, inspired utterance and the wonder working of some gifted Christians. This categorization clearly contradicts what Paul says in 1 Cor 12 that all those who profess the Lord Jesus are charismatic (12:3) and that anyone who has received a gift and who is using it to build up the Church, the body of Christ, can rightly be called charismatic (12:7). F. Sullivan explains the connection of the two terms in this way:

Just as Pentecost was followed by the Apostles' discovery of their charismatic power to convert multitudes, to stand up and confess the name of Jesus before the Sanhedrin, to suffer joyfully for his name, to heal the sick and to raise the dead, so also, throughout Christian history, men and women have had 'Pentecostal' experiences which marked for them also the beginning of their charismatic gifts ... the former mark the beginning of a new experience and working of the Holy Spirit, and the latter are 'manifestations' of that new presence 'for a useful purpose'.³

According to Sullivan, this experience lies behind a more intense living of Christian life, the founding of religious congregations in the Church and the origin of many individual vocations to the priesthood and religious life.⁴ Therefore, the terms 'Pentecostal' and 'charismatic' are not the prerogative of any Christian denomination. It rather becomes clear, from the foregoing, that Pentecostalism is not a problem. In fact, it is God's gift to the Church. The Pentecostal movement should exist to promote the awareness of the universal mission of the Church, which is realised only under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The Catholic charismatic movement, which began around 1960, also emphasize these gifts of the Spirit - the *charismata* - for the living of Christian life. Like their counterparts, they argue that those who compose the

'true church' receive the gift of tongues accompanied by other manifestations of the Spirit, such as the power of healing.⁵ It is an aberration to ask, as some do, if these gifts are essential to the life of the Church. As one can read from Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:7-10,27-31; Eph 4:11-12 and 1 Pet 4:10, these gifts are concrete manifestations of the Spirit to individuals in the Church, to be used for service of one another. Rather, the problem is, why occasional hostility and disharmony are associated with some of these gifts, and how this hostility is blurring the nature of the Spirit's influence in the life of Christians. These are questions Paul was called up to address in the Corinthian Church (1 Cor 12:1).

2. Crises in the Corinthian Church

The Corinthian Church suffered various crises, most of which are the problems of the Church today. It seems the community had appealed to Paul's own teaching in order to correct the confusions that invaded the life and liturgy of the community. A thorough reading of 1 Corinthians shows that the problems presented in 1 Cor 12 have significant echoes in the entire letter. On the basis of this reading, it is possible to discern the problems that Paul introduces with one sentence "Now concerning spiritual matters..." (1 Cor 12:1a). Of the issues mentioned in the letter, the question to which Paul dedicated most attention is that of the exercise of spiritual gifts in the community.

We can imagine a community where certain spiritual gifts (tongues, miracles, eloquent utterances) are valued more highly than others. Those who have the higher gifts boast of them and others consider them as the 'spirituals'. This is implied in the rebuke in 3:1 and 14:37. One can suppose that the disunity in the Corinthian community was caused by some people's attachment to these people of worth (1 Cor 1:11-13), to the denigration of others who do not possess such gifts. In 1 Cor 12:25 there is reference to 'dissention' (ἡ οὐκία), meaning that the manifestation of spiritual gifts gave rise to tension and conflict in the community. A social class dimension of this tension is elaborated in 12:22-25 in terms of a distinction between 'the weaker and stronger', 'the less honourable and those with greater honour', 'the less respected and the more respected'. 1 Cor 1-3 is an extensive discussion of personal pride and arrogance because of the possession of a gift.

Oratorical demonstration of human wisdom may well be another problem as 1 Cor 2:1-5 implies. Paul began the letter by thanking God for enriching the Corinthians with every possible gift, especially the gifts of knowledge and speech (1:5-7). His subsequent critique of their wisdom and knowledge in

12:1-3 shows that they were using such gifts to uphold personal worth and to the harm of their fellow Christians. Paul warns this congregation of the dangers of using human wisdom to explain divine realities. His entire argument in these chapters suggests that they were missing the essential point about genuine Christian wisdom, the true wisdom that is folly in human eyes.

Above all, Paul wrestled with the wrong notion among members of this community that the possession of those 'higher' gifts is clear indication of the person's spirituality (1 Cor 3:1-4). It can be said with confidence that the problem to which Paul addresses is too much emphasis on external manifestation which led some Corinthian Christians to pride, power and prestige, to arrogance, spiritual competition, the appraisal of human wisdom and its corresponding flagrant lifestyle. Therefore, Paul's primary concern was to set the gifts of the Spirit in perspective and to relate them to the common life of the Church. There is scholarly consensus that the answers to these problems are articulated in 1 Cor 13-14.

One can approximate what happened at Corinth to the present crisis in the Church today over the Pentecostal phenomenon. Priests and ministers are distinguished on the basis of their ability or not to work miracles and speak in tongues. Some Christians who call themselves 'born again' consider others as 'fake' because they neither speak in tongues nor pray in ecstatic frenzy. Other Christians consider the 'born again(s)' as unreal, explaining their spiritual experiences as some kind of aberration of the mind. For this reason, people are now said to pray the Catholic way or the charismatic way or the Anglican way and so on. More recently, a story is told concerning a petitioner at Mass, who began her prayer of the faithful by first raising her hands, closing her eyes and shouting "In the mighty name of Jesus!" At that instance, the chief celebrant quietened her with the words: "we do not pray like that here"! Another story is told of one who attended a prayer meeting of some Catholics and expressed his surprise, "even Catholics receive the Spirit". This reveals a high level of ignorance in the nature of the Spirit's working in the life of the Christian. One also notices that manifestations of miraculous healing take place within some communities and they do not happen in others. And one may ask what ingredient is there in the faith of these Christians, which enables them to experience what escapes others. The key to this entire dilemma may be found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Thanks to Paul's response, we have a document we can consult as first step to a corrective to the extant problems of the Church. This paper intends to simply re-propose the Corinthian hermeneutic to the problems associated with the Pentecostal phenomenon in the Church today.

A. Paul's Catechesis: "I do not want you to be uninformed" (1 Cor 12:1b)

Certain features connect today's Pentecostal phenomena to the Corinthian experience. These features are: emphasis on external manifestation: tongues, animated oratory, ecstatic prayer and utterances, signs and wonders, which many scholars call a triumphalistic view of spirit life.⁶ In the light of this triumphalistic understanding, Paul's response is cautionary and pedagogical. He patiently undertook a detailed catechesis of the matter by firstly trying to remove their ignorance: *I do not want you to be uninformed* (1 Cor 12:1). His catechesis on this matter runs in the following directions:

3.1. The Vocabulary

Most of the time, the names we give to things represent the level of our knowledge about them. The Corinthians' appraisal and description of external signs (tongues, healing, miracle etc) as πνευματικά (*pneumatika*) revealed to Paul their level of knowledge with regard to spiritual matters. It appears from 1 Cor 12:1 that the Corinthians were using this term to describe these spiritual manifestations, and persons capable of such signs as 'the spirituals'. This Greek word, translated as 'spiritual gifts' in most English Versions of the Bible, does not include any idea of 'gift' in its etymology. Being a masculine or neuter genitive plural, which can be translated as 'spiritual persons' or 'spiritual things', it refers principally to those extraordinary manifestations like speaking in tongues, prophecy, signs and wonders (the neuter meaning is preferred here on the basis of 1 Cor 2:13 and 9:11). Corinthian Christians were well acquainted with such spiritual manifestations in their worship. It is evident from Paul's teaching what the problem was, that is, that they understood these external manifestations as evidence of people's personal worth and sophistication. Certain people were revered in the community because they exhibited particular signs of wisdom and knowledge (cf. 1 Cor 1:4,8). Among these manifestations, they prided most about the ability to speak in tongues and to interpret them (cf. 1 Cor 13:1). Paul, therefore, writes that he did not want them to be ignorant. He undertakes a corrective of this vocabulary by introducing another distinctive terminology in v4 – χαρίσματα (*charismata*), which refers to these manifestations as 'gracious divine gifts'.

Charismata derives from the word χάρις (*charis*), meaning 'free gift', 'gift of grace' or 'work of grace'. This word is coined by Paul to address an issue of great theological importance in the Church – the notion of grace. All except one (1 Pet 4:10) of its 17 occurrences in the NT appears in Paul's letters. He

applies the word in three fields of meaning⁷. It describes [a] the essential grace of redemption and eternal life (Rom 5:15f; 6:23), [b] particular divine favours to individuals (2 Cor 1:10) or to a group (Rom 11:29) and [c] it is found in association with Paul's notion of the Christian community as the body of Christ (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12-14; Eph 4). In this last application, the word describes God's gifts to members of the community by which they become effective instruments of God's grace to others and in the building up of the community.

The semantic difference between πνευματικά and χαρίσματα lies in the changed emphasis on them as gifts of God and not as personal achievement. Paul's aim was to teach them that verbal display of spiritual inspiration or external manifestations of spiritual signs must be interpreted as God's gifts of grace and not as the personal achievement or property of the speaker. This should be understood as the distinction between what one owns by right and what one receives as a gift. While the former leads to an exercise of power in self-conceit, the latter makes one a servant of God's mysteries. Paul emphasizes that God's sovereign initiative in empowering spiritual gifts in individuals is for the service of God (v5) and of the Christian community (v7). It is evident from the foregoing that the actual problem of the community was not the possession of these gifts but especially in their being used to promote personal worth and position.

Having corrected the vocabulary, Paul talks about the need to discern the spirit behind these manifestations.

3.2 The discernment of spirits

How Paul begins his catechesis leads one to think that probably, the Corinthians regarded speaking in tongues and prophecy as clear signs of the Holy Spirit's presence. Therefore, he informs his audience that *glossolalia* and prophecy have parallels in paganism, as he says: *you know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray by idols that could not speak* (1 Cor 12:2). Paul's words could be corroborated with a credible record of inspired utterances which originate from sources other than the Spirit of God. For instance, Acts 16:16 speaks of a slave-girl who prophesied under the influence of an evil spirit. Moreover, ancient and current literatures speak of mediums and Christian leaders whose ecstatic frenzy, inspired utterances and wonderful signs are derived from magic and / or from some evil forces. A direct question on the authenticity of these manifestations is not asked in our text. Usually, however, such phenomena are not accepted at face value. Problems have arisen in the Church, which derive from the attempts by Church authorities to

discern the religious experiences of its members. These attempts often met with resistance. The problems that arise from this conflict range from massive withdrawal from the Church to the excommunication of certain Church members. Every community discerns the authenticity of the religious experiences of its members, a function which is most often the prerogative of the authorities. In Judaism, for instance, the Prophetic literature has many warnings against false prophets (cf. Deut 13; 18; Jer 14:14; 23:21; Ezek 13:3-6). Within Christianity, Paul was not the only NT author to address the problem. Matthew has an explicit warning against *false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves* (7:15; 24:11, 25. cf. also 1 Jn 4:1-3; Rev 2:20). According to this Matthean text, their often-orthodox appearance makes the need for discernment more urgent. Paul's words feature here as vested with the authority to discern and establish the qualitative difference between the activity of the Spirit and other forms of extraordinary manifestations. The aim is to preserve the doctrine and the unity of the Church. He advocates the recognition of his apostolic authority when he says later in 1 Cor 14:37-38: *Anyone who claims to be a prophet, or to have spiritual powers, must acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. Anyone who does not recognize this is not to be recognized.*

The above evidences from the OT and NT, as well as the close link in 1 Cor 12:10 between prophecy and discernment of spirit seem to imply that the need for discernment concerns the gift of prophecy especially. Paul's catechesis in this matter was to help them to recognize and appreciate the real nature of prophecy, which he describes with words like *parakalein* and *paraklesis*, meaning 'to exhort', 'to build up', 'to console' and 'to encourage' (1 Cor 14:3, 31. cf. also Lk 3:18; Acts 4:36; 11:22-24; 13:1; 15:32). Therefore, the substance of the utterances, and not the appearance, of a prophet prove him or her to be true or false (1 Cor 14:29; 1 Thess. 5:19-22). It also does not reside in the ability of the prophet to work miracles and cast out demons (Lk 6:43-46).

Another important consideration in this matter concerns the indeterminate nature of the Spirit's working and the freedom which God exercises in his giving. One recalls how, on the basis of certain criteria peculiar to Judaism, the scribes warned people off Jesus; attributing the spirit behind his words and works to Beelzebub and not to the Spirit of God (cf. Mk 3:20-30). Jesus' reply to this accusation has undertones, which alerts his hearers to the grave danger of attributing a genuinely inspired word and work of the Spirit to the devil (Mk 3:29). Paul was well aware of the difficulties involved in this work of discernment. Therefore, he considers it something of utmost importance that there should exist some theological categories for evaluating spiritual gifts.

Before we go on to develop how Paul presents his solution in the rest of the letter, it is important to refer to Gal 5:22f, where he talks of the fruits of the Spirit. Certain behaviours and attitudes are manifest in the life of those who are truly under the Spirit's influence. These are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These attitudes characterize those who truly live and exercise under the influence of the Spirit. On the contrary, those who are conceited, competitive and envious (Gal 5:26) cannot be acting under the Spirit's influence. These negative attitudes are obviously the causes of dissension in the community.

3.2 Speaking in Tongues

It is important, at this juncture, to give particular attention to the gift of tongue. There was especially a strong disharmony over the usefulness of gift of tongues. While some exhibit an exaggerated esteem for it, others would want to forbid its use, at least in public (1 Cor 14:39). Since the time of Paul, the belief still persists that it is the most distinctive feature of the presence of the Spirit in the life of a Christian, and naturally it remains a controversial argument between main line churches and the members of the Pentecostal movement. As in the Corinthian Church, speaking in tongues is one of the major causes of disunity in the Church today. It is therefore not surprising that Paul dedicated an entire chapter to it (1 Cor 14). The nature of Paul's catechesis in this matter is very peculiar because he was addressing a matter that is familiar to the Church, a spiritual experience that they held in high esteem. On this issue, Paul made three important remarks. Firstly, he did not deny the genuineness of their experience. Doing so would have meant losing the trust of the Corinthians or even a rejection of the inspiration and freedom of God. He also did not encourage those who would want to forbid speaking in tongues (14:39). Rather, he describes the experience for what it is: the language of angels (13:1), a direct conversation with God about divine mysteries (14:2), a prayer of praise and thanksgiving said in the spirit (14:13-19), comprehensible only to those who have the gift of interpretation (14:27-28). The nature of this experience thus considered, Paul advised the tongue speakers to do so in their private prayers where it benefits the speaker (14:4) or in the assemblies only when there is an interpreter (14:26-28). Secondly, Paul recommends a useful principle that should guide the exercise of tongues and other spiritual gifts. As he says in 14:26, 40: *Let all things be done for building up ... decently and in order.* In connection with this principle, he claims to speak in tongues more than any one of them but he chose not to exercise this gift for the benefit of others (14:18). This implies that the recipient of this gift

can control its use depending on the circumstance. Thirdly, on the basis on the overriding principle of 'building up' and 'order', Paul enumerates the gifts in 14:8-10 according to their usefulness in the Church's up building. ... *those who prophesy talk to other people for their up building and encouragement and consolation. Those who speak in a tongue build up themselves, but those who prophesy build up the church* (14:5). By placing tongue speaking in the ninth position, it is believed that Paul intended to diminish its importance in the minds of the Corinthians. Finally, it is worth noting that according to 1 Cor 12-14, this gift is not given to everybody. Therefore, if a Christian does not speak in tongues, it should not be presumed that the Holy Spirit is not in control of the person's life.

3.3 Unity of Pneumatology, Christology and Ecclesiology

The following are the three major ways in which Paul resolves the other problem connected with spiritual gifts by speaking of the unity of all Christians in the Spirit, in Jesus Christ and in the Church.

a. Every Christian possesses the Spirit

Having said that ecstatic utterance can be produced by a variety of stimuli (v 2), Paul goes on to show how the substance of the utterance should be a determining factor. *Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says, "Let Jesus be cursed"* (v 3). Today, as in the Corinthian Church, due to the ability of some members of the community to manifest extraordinary signs, other Christians revere them as highly spiritual people, through whom the Holy Spirit works signs and wonders. Those who possessed these gifts therefore thought that others were not as spiritual as themselves. In his letter, Paul acknowledged the authenticity of these religious experiences but he speaks in favor of the highest form of inspired utterance, which is the expression "Jesus is Lord". *No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit* (1 Cor 12:3). In all his letters, Paul assures that Christian life is not possible without the reception of the Holy Spirit. In fact, being led by the Spirit is very central to Paul's understanding of the transition from Jew, Gentile states to Christian discipleship. For this reason, all those who profess Jesus Christ have entered the realm of the Spirit, and no one should be despised, denigrated or downgraded. In other words, every Christian is spiritually gifted; or to use a common day terminology, every Christian is 'charismatic' because *to each is given a manifestation of the Spirit* (12:7). External manifestations of spiritual frenzy are good, prophecy is even better, but the testimony to Jesus is of supreme importance (Rom 10:9; Phil 2:11).

b. The Charismatic gifts and the growth of the Body of Christ

Paul describes the charisms in their diversity and unity. The Spirit gives his gifts to members for the building up of the Church not for its division. In the rest of the chapter, Paul develops the metaphor of the Church's union with Christ through the Spirit. He speaks of two important characteristics of spiritual gifts and how importance is accorded to each in the measure in which it unites and edifies, rather than dismembers the Church. There is a random list of nine gifts: wisdom, Knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, various kinds of tongues and the interpretation of tongues. List of others are given in Rom 12:6-8 and Eph 4:11-13, being gifts bestowed by the Spirit to meet the needs of each particular community. The items in these lists show that tongues, prophecy and miracles are not the only gifts of the Spirit.

Paul speaks of the equality of the gifts by the fact of their being given by the same Spirit (12:4-6). Some gifts may be more spectacular than others, but this does not imply that those who receive them are more spiritual than others. The Spirit is the figurative element and agent of the unity of all Christians to Christ and to themselves. Secondly, he uses the word διατρεσεις (*diatreseis*) to speak of the diverse expressions of God's unitary gift. By manifesting himself in these diverse ways (12:7), the Spirit assures the interdependence of the members. The result is an interdependent organism, like a human body, in which diversity in the giftedness of members should more essentially lead to unity, service of one another, and not to self-seeking, envy and arrogance. Therefore, Paul envisions a gracious synergy, not tolerance; a situation in which all share in one another's joys and sorrows (12:26). Finally and more importantly, Paul argues that the value of each gift depends on how it aids the growth of the Church and her members. This is the very reason why the Spirit showers gifts on Christians, that they may improve the life of one another and grow in their knowledge of Jesus. In fact, in 1 Cor 13, Paul points to 'love' as the criteria for evaluating every spiritual gift.

c. The Charismatic gifts and authentic witness to Christ

In 1 Cor 12:2 Paul makes a connection between the promptings of the Holy Spirit and confession of the lordship of Jesus. This connection is of fundamental importance in this argument because it can help us to place the right priorities in any discussion about the Spirit's influence in the life of a Christian. Should one place importance in external manifestations or in actual witness to Christ within the Christian community? Is the ability to speak in tongues, to work miracles or to prophecy actually a sign of inner spirituality?

In his letters, Paul presents the work of the Spirit in relation to Christ. The Spirit is of Christ (Rom 8:9; 2 Cor 3:17); the Spirit convicts humanity of sin and fosters Christian life (Rom 8:9-11); the Spirit guides and teaches Christians till they reach fullness and perfect knowledge of Christ (Eph 4:13). More importantly, the Spirit helps the Christian to discern the will of God in every situation and to act according to the mind of Christ (Rom 8:7-8; 12:2; 1 Cor 2:15-16). Therefore, those whom the Spirit inspires to speak or to act can only do so in ways that glorify the Lordship of Jesus. In other words, the Holy Spirit promotes an authentic witness to Christ; the Holy Spirit is at work where the Lord Jesus is authentically confessed. Where the Lord Jesus is authentically confessed? What Paul says in response to this question has echoes in his other letters. Since most churches of Pauline foundation had experiences of spiritual manifestation, it is difficult to believe that the problem under discussion was unique to the Corinthian Church. Gal 5:13-21 and Rom 12:1-21 show that other Churches were as much beset by similar problems. We should recall that in these texts Paul also discusses both the gifts of the Spirit and marks of true Christianity, in relation to what he calls 'spiritual worship' (Rom 12:1). In these texts also, as in 1 Cor 12-14, he sets the many problems of the Church (Gal 5:19-21; Rom 12:2-3) against the great command to love (Gal 5:22; Rom 12:9-11).

It is possible to see from these three texts that because of the attachment and excitement over external charismatic manifestations, members of these communities were not able to see that something was deeply wrong with their life of witness to Christ. The Spirit affects a transformation and renewal of the person for which he or she no longer conforms to the ways of the world (Rom 12:2). To live in the Spirit is to live beyond a purely human level, as Paul tells the Corinthians in 1 Cor 3:1-3:

But I could not talk to you, my friends, as people who have the Spirit; I had to deal with you on the natural plane, as infants in Christ ... Can you not see that as long as there is jealousy and strife among you, you are unspiritual, living on the purely human level?

Exactly what he means by living unspiritually or living according to the flesh is outlined in Gal 5:19-21: fornication, indecency, debauchery, idolatry, sorcery, quarrels, contentious temper, envy, fits of rage, selfish ambitions, dissensions, party intrigues, jealousy, drinking bouts, orgies and the like. According to the solutions that Paul proffers in 1 Cor 13, it is possible for one

to have the gifts of tongues, prophecy and knowledge and still be found wanting in spiritual matters. A comparison of the negative and positive attitudes in Gal 5:13-21 and 1 Cor 13:1-21 shows that 'walking in the Spirit' is the same as 'walking in love'. Out of their life in the Spirit there are to come visible and practical deeds of love in the Christian community. All eight of the fruit of the Spirit enumerated in Gal 5:22-23 may be regarded as manifestations of the believers' radically new life in Christ, sustained by love. To be bound to Christ is to be bound to one another in love that cares and that serves. Since love is not jealous, boastful, arrogant or rude, because it does not push itself forward or harbour resentment, it may be said to be the sign of one who is guided by the Spirit. Therefore, the key to a rights use of spiritual gifts is love because love builds up.

4. Conclusion

The foregoing study of the Pentecostal phenomenon in the Church has revealed that this phenomenon has remained consistent in its principles from the time of the Corinthian Church till the present. Paul is the most widely read of the New Testament books and yet the Church and the different branches of the Pentecostal movement have very little followed his catechesis on this matter. If one is to investigate the persistent attachment of the Pentecostals to the conviction that all Christian experience must begin like that of the first disciples with a baptism in the Spirit, the following reason could be true. It may be because the dynamic and experienced nature of life in the Spirit is generally being lost, and in much of its subsequent history, the Church has marginalized the experience of the Spirit in her self-understanding and preaching. If this reason somehow represents an undermining of the work of the Spirit in the Church, let me state without much ado that this does not represent my intention. On the contrary, the Spirit has been behind the Church's liturgy and preaching, her healing ministry, theology, the founding of many religious institutes, intense living of Christian life by many, and the origin of many individual vocations to the priesthood and religious life, to mention but a few. What I am actually saying is that generally, the life of many members of the Church hardly mirrors that dynamically experienced reality of life in the Spirit, a dynamism that persists, not in external manifestation, but in the living out of those values that are found in the cross of Christ (1 Cor 2:11-16). Since many of us are still being conditioned by worldly values and lifestyle, it is momentous to call our Christianity to question.

End notes and References

- ¹ cf. Synan, V. *Charismatic Bridges*, Michigan: Servant Books, 1974, p 8; Sullivan, F., *Charisms and Charismatic Renewal: A Biblical and Theological Study*, Michigan: Servant Books, 1982. pp 50-53)
 - ² Sullivan, F, *Ibid.* p. 52
 - ³ F. Sullivan, *Ibid.* pp. 78-79
 - ⁴ *Ibid.* 79.
 - ⁵ W. E. Mills, *Speaking in Tongues*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986. p. 3
 - ⁶ Martin Dale, *The Corinthian Body*, 1995.
 - ⁷ F. Sullivan, *Ibid.* pp. 17-18..
- Le Déaut, R., "Pentecost and Jewish Tradition" in *Doctrine and Life* 20 (1970) 250-267

©Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN)

First published 2007

Ava Publishers.

2a Dawson Road, Benin City
Edo State, Nigeria.

ISBN: 978 – 8028 – 41 – 1

All rights reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise without the permission of the copyright owners.