

The Doctrine of Baptism in the Spirit in the Charismatic Movement

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Abstract

The article addresses the major terms and issues regarding the doctrine of baptism in the Spirit in the Charismatic movement. It considers the historical and biblical foundations of the doctrine of baptism in the Spirit, and defines the Charismatic movement. It engages issues of Spirit-baptism such as timing (immediacy or subsequence), stages in Christian growth (second blessing or third blessing), signs accompanying Spirit-baptism (observable or non-observable, normative or descriptive), and the relationship of experience and doctrine. The article shows that baptism in the Spirit is interpreted differently by different charismatic groups in order to accommodate their particular denominational theology – in the historic Protestant churches, in the Roman Catholic Church and in the independent churches. Different groups use different biblical texts in support of their Spirit-baptism pneumatology. Some focus on the descriptive passages of Acts, some on the didactic passages of Paul, while some are aiming for integrative use of those texts and also the passages of John. The doctrine of Spirit-baptism appears divisive on the surface, because of its numerous nuances, but it is actually a common denominator and a strong unifying factor across the charismatic world. The effects of Spirit-baptism are numerous and seen as positive and desirable for personal and church growth.

Introduction

The following text deals with the doctrine of baptism in the Spirit in the Charismatic movement. Taking into consideration that there are many different views, nuances, details and opinions regarding the experience and doctrine of Spirit-baptism and that the Charismatic movement is so widespread across the historic churches and the independent churches, I must say that this paper cannot be and does not intend to be exhaustive or comprehensive. However, the paper does address the major terms and issues regarding the doctrine and the movement, and strives to be informative and to provide a cross-section of this crucial doctrine within the Charismatic movement.

Doctrine of baptism in the Spirit

In defining the doctrine of baptism in the Spirit it is important to consider its historical and biblical foundation. According to common charismatic doctrine,¹ the historical beginning of baptism in the Spirit, available to all believers (there is an example of Jesus being baptized in the Spirit before that), is the day of Pentecost around the year 30 A.D., described in Acts 2. Before this event, there was a clear and repeated promise of the baptism and coming of the Holy Spirit. Prophet Joel foretold the pouring out of God's Spirit on the people (Jl 2:28-32). John the Baptist clearly announced that Jesus would baptize people with the Holy Spirit – recorded in all four Gospels (Mt 3:11, Mk 1:8, Lk 3:16, Jn 1:33). In the Gospel of John, in several texts in chapters 14 to 16, Jesus promised his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit to them. At the end of the Gospel of Luke, Jesus promised to send what his Father had promised (24:49). Luke stated again that Jesus had previously announced the Father's promise and baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5). Jesus stated again that the Holy Spirit would come on the disciples (Acts 1:8). Finally, the promise was fulfilled as the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples, filled them and inspired them to speak in other tongues (Acts 2). Peter explained this phenomenon as the fulfilment of the prophet Joel's eschatological prophecy, that God would pour out his Spirit on the people (Acts 2:16-21, Jl 2:28-32).

The book of Acts gives accounts of several occurrences of Spirit-baptism (that is, what Pentecostals and some Charismatics consider to be Spirit-baptism): a group of about a hundred and twenty disciples (2:1-4), a prayer group of disciples (4:31), a group of Samaritans (8:14-17), Saul (9:17-18), gentile Cornelius and his

1 I am using the term "common" because this doctrine is constantly debated and differs in charismatic circles. Several different views will be identified further in this paper.

household (10:41-44) and a group of John's disciples at Ephesus (19:1-6). Peter retells the account of Cornelius and remembers Jesus' promise of Spirit-baptism (11:15-17). The term "baptism in the Holy Spirit" is not found in the biblical text in the noun form, but always in the verb form—"baptized" in the Holy Spirit. The texts of Acts present different verbs which are considered to signify Spirit-baptism: the Holy Spirit "came down," "descended on," "fell on," was "poured out," and believers were "filled with" or "received" the Holy Spirit. This paper abstains from the debate about prepositions, whether it is baptism "in" or "with" or "of" the Holy Spirit, and uses the terms "baptism in the Spirit" and "Spirit-baptism" interchangeably. Besides Lukan texts, there are Pauline (e.g. 1 Cor 12:13, Eph 4:5) and Johannine texts (e.g. Jn ch. 14-15) that are considered in relation to Spirit-baptism. Just like Lukan texts, they are interpreted differently by different charismatic groups, in support of their particular theology.

Common charismatic theology usually takes Jesus Christ as an example and paradigm for baptism in the Spirit. When Jesus was born he was born a new creature because he was conceived by the Holy Spirit and without sin. Therefore, the Spirit-conception and birth of Jesus equals a believer's new birth by the Spirit (regeneration). At about the age of thirty, Jesus was water baptized by John the Baptist, and then the Holy Spirit descended on him in the form of a dove (Lk 3:22). In common charismatic theology this is considered to be Jesus' baptism in the Spirit. Luke further reports that Jesus was filled with the Spirit (Lk 4:1), led to the desert by the Spirit (4:1), and started his public ministry in the power of the Spirit (4:14). This provides a perfect storyline of baptism in the Spirit: the Holy Spirit descends on a person, fills the person, leads the person and empowers the person for witnessing and serving.

Common charismatic theology also takes the example of the apostles and other first century disciples being baptized in the Spirit, as a pattern to be followed. Peter is a prime example. It is assumed that sometime in the period of his following the earthly Jesus he believed in Jesus Christ and was regenerated, and so the other apostles (possibly when Jesus breathed on them to receive the Holy Spirit, Jn 20:22). In the book of Acts we find the following facts about Peter: he was baptized in the Spirit and spoke in tongues, the Spirit gave him understanding of the Scriptures, he witnessed to multitudes with great results, he was full of the Spirit and showed great courage in the face of danger to witness for Jesus, he manifested the gift of healing and miracles, he laid hands on others to receive the Spirit, he was empowered for a specific apostolic ministry. The list is not exhaustive, but in common charismatic theology Peter provides a clear general pattern of baptism in the Spirit, with its manifestations and effects—a pattern to be continually applied to all believers. In the book of Acts there is also the example of other apostles and of deacons.

While some claim that there is a line of Spirit-filled believers that can be traced from the early church to contemporary church, the beginning of the modern experience of baptism in the Spirit is attributed to the events that occurred in Topeka, Kansas and Azusa Street in Los Angeles in the first years of the twentieth century. Groups of believers experienced baptism in the Holy Spirit as described in the book of Acts and the experience rapidly spread to other believers and other parts of the world. The spread was so impressive that it is often described as an “explosion,” with amazingly high numerical data of believers who experienced Spirit-baptism.²

The effects of Spirit-baptism are quite tangible and significant. Considering biblical narratives and the effects of Spirit-baptism, Peter again emerges as a prime example, and it is no surprise that he becomes a theme for many sermons describing him before and after Spirit-baptism. Considering the modern experience of Spirit-baptism, its effects are also perceptible and remarkable. Williams expresses well its significance: “So with Spirit baptism the whole being of a person – body, soul and spirit – is imbued with the Spirit of God. Likewise, the community of those who are so baptized is profoundly affected in its total life. Both individual and community are touched in every area by the presence and power of the living God” (Williams, 1998, 200), and “This is a totality of penetration with the Holy Spirit whereby, in a new way, all areas of one’s being – body, soul and spirit (the conscious and the subconscious depths) – become sensitized to the divine presence and activity” (Williams, 1998, 203). Many authors emphasize the fact that believers who experience Spirit-baptism become intensely aware of the reality and presence of God in their lives. In his article on the Catholic perspective of Spirit-baptism, Del Colle lists the following effects: “assurance of the power of the Holy Spirit, a strong sense of the presence and love of God, a real boldness, joyful prayer, deliverance from Satan’s power and the gift of tongues” (Del Colle, 2004, 227). If I may give my own list of effects it would be: heightened awareness of God, enthusiasm for Jesus Christ (and his church and his kingdom), a new desire to praise and worship him, a new power to resist sin and pursue righteousness, a new interest and conviction in God’s Word, a new or increased capacity for prayer, a new boldness in witnessing, and an openness and desire for the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In answering the question of circumstances and conditions in which Spirit-baptisms occur, Williams describes several possible contexts: the context of God’s sovereign will, the context of prayer, the context of obedience, the context of surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ, and the context of expectancy (Williams, 1998, 293-306). In conclusion, baptism in the Holy Spirit is a tremendously

2 For more information consult “Pentecostalism” in a theological dictionary or online.

significant and powerful act of God's grace. It is a gift of God to those who believe in Christ, where the exalted Christ himself baptizes a believer in the Holy Spirit. During the event of being baptized in the Spirit there are usually one or more visible manifestations of the Spirit – speaking in tongues, ecstatic worship and prophesying. The effects of baptism in the Spirit in the life of a believer are also visible as the believer is empowered for witnessing and serving. As White states, “Among the greatest blessings conferred by the Christian gospel is the personal indwelling and endowment of the divine Spirit” (White, 1999, 121).

Charismatic movement

The word “charismatic” comes from the New Testament Greek word “charisma” that is translated as “gift of the Spirit,” while “charisma” comes from the Greek word “charis” which means “grace”. The word charismatic is generally used to describe Christians who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit and who manifest one or more of the supernatural gifts of the Spirit described in 1 Cor 12.³ The term “Charismatic movement” (also “Charismatic renewal”) describes a movement that started in the middle of the twentieth century, propelled by Spirit baptisms and manifestations of supernatural gifts of the Spirit. It has been spreading through historic churches, but also through independent churches to this day. “The Charismatic movement with its eruption in almost every Christian tradition appeared as an outpouring of the Spirit ‘on all flesh’ as prophesied by Joel and applied in Acts 2:17.” (Hocken, 1994, 48)

The movement is historically and theologically linked to its predecessor – the Pentecostal movement that started at the very beginning of the twentieth century and quickly spread all over the world in several decades. From the middle of the twentieth century, as the Pentecostal experience of Spirit-baptism expanded into most historic Protestant churches, the Catholic Church, some Orthodox believers, and the newly developed independent (non-denominational) churches, the Charismatic movement swept the Christian world. The global Charismatic movement can now be observed in “three major strands: (1) charismatic renewal in the historic Protestant churches (from the 1950s); (2) charismatic renewal in the Roman Catholic Church (from 1967); (3) charismatic renewal in the independent sector (from the late 1960s).” (Hocken, 1999, 404)

In relation to global movements, or so-called “waves” of the Holy Spirit, the Charismatic movement is also known as “the second wave” of the Holy Spirit, the

3 This issue is also debated in charismatic circles, whether only supernatural or all gifts should be called charisms and associated with Spirit-baptism.

Pentecostal movement being “the first wave.” The so-called “third wave” began in the early 1980s, with the main idea and thrust that God is reinstating the offices of apostles and prophets, re-establishing the five-fold ministry and government of the church (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, Eph 4:11), and restoring signs and wonders accompanying the preaching of the Gospel, as in the book of Acts (“Pentecostal, Charismatic, Third Wave Movements” 2009). Recently, some scholars such as David Pawson are suggesting a “fourth wave” of the Holy Spirit that would bring together Evangelicals and Charismatics in a global revival, due to their need for each other, theologically and otherwise.⁴

Origins of different views on Spirit-baptism in the Charismatic movement

In the second half of the twentieth century, the experience of Spirit-baptism spread into all of the historic churches. Many Catholic, Protestant, and a much lesser number of Orthodox believers, started experiencing Spirit-baptism in the same way as described in the narratives of Acts and in the same way as experienced by their Pentecostal predecessors in the first half of the twentieth century. At first all of these neo-Pentecostals seemed to accept the classical Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit-baptism, which states that Spirit-baptism happens after being born-again by the Spirit (the doctrine of subsequence), with the manifestation of speaking in tongues (the doctrine of initial evidence) and upon meeting certain conditions (such as repentance, faith, prayer, obedience and other). In fact, since believers in historic churches had already been born-again (regenerated) by the Spirit, and then some time later in their Christian life were baptized in the Spirit, an event that was often accompanied with speaking in tongues, they seemed to confirm the classical Pentecostal view of Spirit-baptism. This neo-Pentecostal view is found today across all charismatic branches, and it is much like the Pentecostal view, with some minor changes – not so dogmatic about the initial evidence and conditions. On the other hand, very soon after experiencing the phenomenon of Spirit-baptism, and ever since, both denominational and independent Charismatics have re-examined, challenged, modified and changed the Pentecostal view. Most historic church members who experienced Spirit-baptism did not leave their churches, but expected their experience to serve the purpose of revival within the existing church/denomination, and sought to find a theological explanation for their experience within the confines of their existing church and theology. This is one of the main

4 See David Pawson's book, *Fourth Wave: Charismatics and Evangelicals - Are We Ready to Come Together?*

reasons for different views and explanations of Spirit-baptism in every Charismatic branch. Some churches were more, and some less, welcoming of this new experience of Spirit-baptism. Those more welcoming saw it as a revival opportunity and sought to accommodate it theologically to their existing pneumatology and wider theological system. Many welcoming denominations created organizations for promotion of charismatic renewal in their churches. Those less welcoming often held a cessationist pneumatology, a conviction that Spirit-baptism and supernatural gifts of the Spirit ceased in the early church period, mainly because of the closure of the New Testament canon, and cannot exist today.⁵ In some cases, when Spirit-baptism was rejected as psychological or even diabolical by certain churches, some believers who were Spirit-baptised left their churches and joined charismatic churches or started new charismatic churches. Regarding the Orthodox view: apparently the Charismatic movement has not been nearly as strong in the Orthodox Church as in other historic churches and it seems to have been marginalized. Even though their theologians boast of the historic charismatic spirituality of the Orthodox Church (Lederle, 1988, 135), it is difficult to find contemporary data and therefore its views are not described in this paper.

Protestant charismatic view of Spirit-baptism

Protestant charismatic views can be divided into sacramental and non-sacramental approaches to Spirit-baptism. The sacramental view states that the gift of the Holy Spirit is received at the sacrament of Christian initiation, that is, water-baptism. Therefore, what happens later when a Christian is baptized in the Spirit is that the sacramental grace is manifested experientially. This is often called “the release of the Spirit,” a key phrase and concept in this view. Through the sacrament of initiation the Holy Spirit dwells in a believer, and at the event of Spirit-baptism the indwelling Holy Spirit is released (manifested, experienced). According to Morgan, “This sacramental interpretation has clearly come to dominate the thinking of most charismatic leaders today, who find the term ‘release of the Spirit’ to be an apt description of the experience” (Morgan, 1990, 483). Therefore, Spirit-baptism is not a new coming of the Spirit upon believers, but an actualization or realization of something previously received in a sacramental initiatory ritual – believers are having a conscious manifestation of the Holy Spirit. This view is found in the sacramental traditions of the Anglican, Lutheran, and Presbyterian circles. The non-sacramental view is actually similar to the sacramental

5 For example, the Church of Christ and the Brethren Church. For more information, see “cessationism” in a theological dictionary or online.

position in that believers are appropriating and experiencing something that they already possess, but this is not tied to the sacraments. In the non-sacramental view, the term “baptism in the Spirit” is reserved exclusively for a unique event on the day of Pentecost, as described in Acts 2. In their theologizing, the Spirit-baptism experience is best described as an infilling or fullness of the Spirit, which is part of the constant process of sanctification. Some advocates of the non-sacramental view consider Spirit-baptism to be “the final stage of Christian initiation completing an otherwise incomplete initiation.” (Lederle, 1988, 44) The non-sacramental view can be found in the charismatic churches of the Reformed, Baptist, Methodist, and also other traditions.

A Reformed view states that baptism in the Spirit happens at the point when a person believes in Jesus Christ, regardless of the experience. Thus, it may or may not be observed and there are no normative qualities prescribed. Their Spirit-baptism pneumatology is based more on the teachings of Paul than the narratives in Acts – more on the didactic than descriptive passages. Therefore, “The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a distinctive blessing of the new age in which all believers are made to participate and drink of the Holy Spirit so that they form one unified body in Christ despite all the denominational or other labels believers may wear.” (Kaiser, 2004, 47)

The Wesleyan view of Spirit-baptism does not highlight the experience of Spirit-baptism, but the doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit, which is primarily the sanctification of a believer. Therefore, Dunning states, “the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in traditional Christian theology is directly related to the doctrine of sanctification... [which] is virtually synonymous with the understanding of the ‘Spirit-filled life.’” (Dunning, 2004, 172) For this stream, the expression “baptism in the Holy Spirit” may equally refer to salvation, being filled with the Spirit and sanctification. What is important is the presence of the Spirit and the sanctification which believers experience through his presence.

Catholic charismatic view of Spirit-baptism

Catholic charismatic renewal is specific because Catholic scholars and clerics were receptive of it and involved in it from the very beginning (Hart, 2004, 148). The experience of Spirit-baptism was seen as valid and desirable for revival. For them, theologically, it was a matter of harmonizing their Pentecostal experience with their Catholic tradition. While their theology sets forth the three sacraments of initiation— baptism, confirmation, and holy communion— they related Spirit-baptism to two sacraments of initiation – baptism and confirmation. At the sacrament of baptism they believe that “we are cleansed of Original Sin and receive sanctifying grace, the life of God within our souls” (Richert, 2012), while

the sacrament of confirmation “perfects our baptism and brings us the graces of the Holy Spirit that were granted to the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday” (Richert, 2012). It is evident how these two sacraments relate to the doctrines of regeneration by the Spirit and baptism in the Spirit in Protestant circles. Therefore, for Catholics the event of Spirit-baptism is the manifestation of the grace already received in the sacraments of initiation. As previously mentioned, some protestant charismatic branches hold practically the same view – that baptism in the Spirit is the release of the fullness of the Spirit already received at the sacrament of Christian initiation. Of course, we have to keep in mind that Catholic theologians may not primarily be concerned with biblical exegesis of Spirit-baptism, but with fitting it suitably into the Roman Catholic teaching (a question of final authority), and they seem to have managed to do just that.

Independent (nondenominational) charismatic view of Spirit-baptism

The independent charismatic sector, as the historic denominational charismatic sector, does not have a unified view of Spirit-baptism, but different views previously described, and also some recent innovations. Generally speaking, the experience of Spirit-baptism and living a Spirit-filled life is more important than the careful theological exegesis of it. Perhaps the independent churches have had the advantage of having more freedom in defining or not defining their theology because they were not bound or pressured by historical denominational theology and they did not necessarily feel the need to explain their Spirit-baptism experience within a particular theological system. Yet we can say that this group has mostly parted with the classical Pentecostal view of a second blessing, the initial evidence of speaking in tongues, and the conditions for Spirit-baptism. This view is not dogmatic – there is space allowed for Spirit-baptism being more or less experiential, for different initial evidence or even non-observable inner work of the Spirit, and for different manifestations and effects. Scholars in this sector are breaking away from a Spirit-baptism doctrine that divides Christians into upper and lower classes, and are seeking new solutions. One example is Wayne Grudem, who suggests using new terms for Spirit-baptism that would better explain the phenomenon and eliminate the divisiveness of the traditional term “baptism in the Spirit.” He suggests the following possible terms: “a large step of growth,” “a new empowering for ministry,” “a new fullness of the Holy Spirit,” “a significant step in growth,” while the best solution he has to offer is “being filled with the Holy Spirit,” because it relates both to growth and ministry, and implies that it should consistently happen to Christians (Grudem, 1994, 781). Another example is Larry Hart who states that Evangelicals and Pentecostals are both right because Spirit-baptism contains both the “regenerational/indwelling and empowering

dimensions” (Hart, 2004, 116) and suggests a dimensional approach which contends that Spirit-baptism includes the saving, sanctifying and empowering dimensions of the Spirit’s work; in his words, “Paschal, Purifying and Pentecostal” (Hart, 2004, 125) dimensions.

Issue of timing - immediacy or subsequence

This paragraph deals with the question of whether Spirit-baptism happens at the time of conversion (immediately when a person believes in Jesus Christ and is born-again by the Spirit) or sometime after the conversion (subsequently in relation to regeneration by the Spirit). Classical Pentecostal pneumatology clearly advocates the doctrine of subsequence, and thus it states that Spirit-baptism is a second work of grace or a second blessing. Pentecostals may also use the term “the full gospel” which indicates that although the Holy Spirit baptizes a person into Christ at the moment of conversion, a believer is yet to be baptized by Christ into the Holy Spirit. Upon being baptized by Christ into the Spirit, a believer experiences the full gospel. Theological affirmation for this view is based on the narratives in the book of Acts where all of the accounts of Spirit-baptism are used to support this position.⁶ The purpose of the Spirit-regeneration is the salvation of a believer, while the purpose of Spirit-baptism is the empowerment of a believer for witness and service. Christian traditions that already had theology of subsequent works of grace readily accepted this view (Hart, 2004, 143), while other Christian traditions whose theology did not previously support the doctrine of subsequent works of grace assumed the stance of immediacy. The latter view is theologically affirmed by two Pauline texts, “For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Cor 12:13, NIV) and “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph 4:4-6, NIV). There is debate as to whether these verses are referring generally to the doctrine of salvation and not to the doctrine of empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Issue of stages in Christian growth

All Pentecostals hold the position that Spirit-baptism is a post-conversion work of the Holy Spirit, but some hold a two-stage position, while others hold a three-

⁶ These accounts are previously set forth in this paper, under “Doctrine of baptism in the Spirit”.

stage position (Swindoll and Zuck, 2003, 494). Therefore, some call it a “second-blessing” and others a “third-blessing.” All those who follow the teaching of John Wesley and the Holiness tradition believe that there is a post-conversion experience identified as the sanctification by the Holy Spirit, when we are made holy, after being saved and before being baptized in the Spirit. This historical stream affirms John Wesley’s doctrine of entire sanctification or Christian perfection, which states that “the heart of the regenerant (born-again) Christian may attain a state of holiness where there is a total love for God and others and empowers them to reject the sinful nature of one’s humanity by the means of a deep cleansing of that nature through the divine grace of God” (“Christian perfection”, 2012). When they add the Spirit-baptism experience to their theology, they end up with a three-stage teaching on the work of the Holy Spirit in a Christian’s life – salvation, sanctification and Spirit-baptism. The Church of God, one of the largest Pentecostal denominations, adheres to this position. According to Swindoll and Zuck, “Nearly one-half of worldwide Pentecostalism holds to the three-blessings concept” (Swindoll and Zuck, 2003, 496). Other Pentecostals believe in two stages of the Holy Spirit’s work, so they hold a second blessing position. The Assemblies of God, another one of the largest Pentecostal denominations, believes that justification and sanctification occur at conversion, and then comes the Spirit-baptism as a second blessing. The view of stages is under harsh criticism because of dividing Christians into categories (it separates Christians into classes of those who have experienced and those who have not), because of the “arrival mentality” (having achieved a spiritual position, there is no need for further growth) and because of a punctiliar misconception (a believer is now permanently spiritual because of a particular one-time experience) (Hart, 2004, 140). It seems that most Charismatics today avoid the doctrines that tend to divide Christians into classes and create disunity in the church. The solution they offer is the teaching that a person receives the fullness of the Holy Spirit and his graces at the time of conversion, and everything that happens subsequently is a release of the Spirit that already dwells in a believer.

Issue of signs accompanying Spirit-baptism

This subject matter raises several questions. Are there visible signs, which confirm that a person has been Spirit-baptized? In other words, is Spirit-baptism observable or non-observable? And, are there specific normative experiences based on biblical texts on Spirit-baptism? Classical Pentecostal doctrine of initial evidence states that speaking in tongues is a physical initial evidence of being Spirit-baptized. This is where the Charismatic movement clearly differs from its Pentecostal predecessor. The Charismatic view is well summarized in this senten-

ce: “One may or may not speak in tongues when baptized in the Holy Spirit, but speaking in tongues is still seen as a normal part of Spirit-filled living available to all” (Hart, 2004, 120). Catholic Charismatics, although some share the same view as Pentecostals concerning the evidence of Spirit-baptism, generally argue that “inspired praise is the only initial evidence, whether in one’s own language or in tongues” (Del Colle, 2004, 232). It is interesting to note that parties on both sides of this issue use the Spirit-baptism narratives of Acts to support their position. Pentecostals argue that speaking in tongues while being Spirit-baptized is explicitly stated in several passages in Acts, and implicitly stated in other passages, because the baptized and the bystanders clearly observed and knew that baptism occurred, so what they observed must have been speaking in tongues. On the other hand, many Charismatics argue that Spirit-baptism texts of Acts show that there are different initial evidences of Spirit-baptism, and therefore none can be considered as normative.

Issue of experience and doctrine

For many Charismatics the doctrine of baptism in the Spirit is definitely experiential and observable, although for some, not necessarily. Many had first experienced Spirit baptism and then sought or heard a theological explanation of it. Others heard the teaching on Spirit-baptism first and then experienced it or recognized that it has already happened. This inevitably creates a tension between experience and doctrine and raises a question of the proper way to do theology – is it right to shape doctrine after the experience or experience after the doctrine? Some think that experience is primary and doctrine is secondary (it is more important to have an encounter with God, than to know theological information), while some think biblical texts should be primary and experience secondary (final authority of the Bible for faith and practice). As “people of the Word,” probably a great majority of us would agree that the written Word of God is the final authority. But how are we to judge the unusual manifestations of Spirit-baptism such as laughter, dancing, falling down (slain in the Spirit), and being drunk in the Spirit? If certain manifestations of Spirit-baptism are not explicitly spelled out in Scripture, can we declare them false or fabricated? In my judgment, the boundaries that we would often like to have are not so definitive. What if the so-called “holy laughter” is simply the result of being filled with the joy of the Spirit, if dancing is the result of a new freedom to worship God that the Spirit brings, if falling down is a consequence of the power of the Spirit (and is He not quite powerful?) coming to a weak human being, if apparent drunkenness is actually being overwhelmed by the Spirit? Of course, everything has to be tested by the written Word of God, but we do find joy, freedom and power of the Holy Spirit in

the Word. But how are we to judge more extreme manifestations such as barking like dogs and roaring like lions? Our personal experience cannot be normative or more authoritative than the Bible. Yet, laying aside extreme manifestations, when there is an occurrence such as Spirit-baptism, so widespread in the modern Christian world, when thousands of believers have had the same or a very similar experience, it is a quite different matter than dealing with an experience of a single or a few individuals. Surely a foundation for a doctrinal stance on Spirit-baptism needs to be the biblical text, and not an experience. Experience has to be tested and evaluated by biblical texts and it can never be more authoritative than the Scripture. Careful spiritual discernment is definitely needed when people have experiences that are not supported by the final authority on faith and practice – the written Word of God. Regarding doctrine, another significant question is yet awaiting a satisfactory answer: Are we going to use the narrative passages of Acts as normative or the didactic passages of Paul as normative for the Spirit-baptism doctrine? In other words, can historical passages be interpreted in the same way as teaching passages? On what basis can something be pronounced as merely descriptive and something as prescriptive? Another important issue is raised up here: Is there a difference in Luke's pneumatology and Paul's pneumatology? These are all substantial questions, but beyond the scope of this paper, and therefore are not dealt with here.

Conclusion

Regarding the doctrine of Spirit-baptism in the Charismatic movement, we can definitely say that there is no consensus and there is no consolidated set of beliefs. There are several different positions and even more sub-positions. The Charismatic movement has parted ways with its forerunner, the Pentecostal movement, regarding the doctrine of Spirit-baptism. Some charismatic groups have not gone far from the Pentecostal view, but retained much of the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit-baptism, and therefore, their view is called neo-Pentecostal. Other charismatic groups have gone farther away from the Pentecostal view, and their views are described as sacramental, non-sacramental and integrative (Lederle, 1988, 144). Different groups use different biblical texts in support of their Spirit-baptism pneumatology – some focus on the descriptive passages of Acts, some on the didactic passages of Paul, while some are aiming for integrative use of those texts and also the passages of John. In my judgment, historical narratives of Acts provide a general pattern of Spirit-baptism, at the same time not a definitive pattern in all details, but allowing for differences. For example, Spirit-baptism may happen before or after water baptism, there may be different visible manifestations, and it may happen with or without the laying on of hands. There

are issues and questions yet to be clearly answered: what exactly is Spirit-baptism is still a matter of interpretation and debate, when and how does it occur, and is it observable or not? Although between Pentecostals and Charismatics, and between different charismatic groups, we find differences in the detailed view of Spirit-baptism, we also find that there is general agreement, especially about the importance of Spirit-baptism; they agree that this experience is crucial, biblical and significant for living a Spirit-filled life. Despite all the debates, the spiritual phenomenon commonly called “the baptism in the Holy Spirit” is the common denominator in all charismatic movements in the historic churches and in the independent sector. In my judgment we should not be too dogmatic about Spirit-baptism; it is not so important when or how it happens, but that it does happen, because the effects are tremendous and desirable for many reasons, a major one being spiritual growth. I would agree with White, contending that “differing exegesis and theological debate must not be allowed to obscure the primary truth: that the Spirit of the living Christ seeks to enrich, enable, empower, and use Christians in every generation” (White, 1999, 122). The doctrine of Spirit-baptism appears divisive on the surface, because of its numerous nuances, but actually, not-so-important issues placed aside, it is also a strong unifying factor across the charismatic world. Spirit-baptism is bringing together different groups in sincere fellowship, even where many thought unity was impossible, between Protestants and Roman Catholics. Charismatic Christianity, based on Spirit-baptism and its effects, has made a great contribution to global Christianity – in spiritual growth, church growth, worship, revivalism, evangelism, church planting and theology. May all Christians experience Spirit-baptism, whatever the interpretation – the church needs it and the world needs it.

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Goran Medved

Doktrina krštenja Duhom u karizmatском pokretu

Sažetak

Članak se bavi glavnim pojmovima i problemima vezanima uz doktrinu krštenja Duhom u karizmatском pokretu. Razmatra se povijesni i biblijski temelj doktrine krštenja Duhom te se definira karizmatский pokret. Bavimo se pitanjima vezanima uz krštenje Duhom, kao što su tempiranje (neposredno ili naknadno), faze kršćanskog rasta (drugi blagoslov ili treći blagoslov), znaci koji prate krštenje Duhom (vidljivi i nevidljivi, normativni ili deskriptivni) te odnos između iskustva i doktrine. Članak pokazuje da razne karizmatские grupe imaju različita tumačenja krštenja Duhom, koja odgovaraju njihovim denominacijskim teologijama: u povijesnim protestantskim crkvama, u rimokatoličkoj crkvi i u samostalnim crkvama. Različite grupe služe se različitim biblijskim tekstovima kako bi potkrijepile svoju pneumatologiju krštenja Duhom. Neke se fokusiraju na deskriptivne odlomke u Djelima, neke na Pavlove didaktičke tekstove, dok neke ciljaju na integrativno korištenje ovih tekstova, kao i dijelova teksta iz Ivanova evanđelja. Doktrina krštenja Duhom se, zbog brojnih varijacija, na prvi pogled čini uzrokom razdora, ali ono je zapravo zajednički nazivnik i snažan ujedinjujući faktor u karizmatском svijetu. Učinci krštenja Duhom brojni su i smatra ih se pozitivnima i poželjnima za osobni rast i rast crkve.