

# Charismatic Pneumatology

Edward H. Schroeder

[A response to the charismatic movement at the Mekane Jesus Seminary,  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 17, 1995]

Our search for a "Spirit-test" in Dip. III doctrine class started with studying Peter's Pentecost sermon. Our Title: "Hearing the Healing" [The "holy" Spirit is the "healing" Spirit ala ML's 2 catechisms. So the initial problem of the hearers in Acts 2 is that they cannot "hear the healing." But the hearing-defect has deep roots.]

Here follows our Biblical Grounding using the Crossings pattern for Biblical study:

The Bad News—

**(D-1)** Of course, in Ethiopia too the Word of God meets a **hearing problem in people**. Not that their eardrums are defective, but that they are already tuned-in to programs coming on other wave-lengths. Besides the EOC and ATR, major local broadcasts getting people's ear are: Islam, plain old secularism, and religious "crazies" from New Age options to Jesus-only anti-trinitarians.

Besides those public broadcasts, there is the Old-Adam & Eve program that plays privately in all the children of that primal pair. So hearing the healing is no piece of cake.

**(D-2)** Behind the **hearing handicap** (D-1) Peter's Pentecost-proclamation diagnoses a heart problem. Their hearts are "tuned in" elsewhere "to other programs." Like all sinners they "hang their hearts" on other "names" trusting those names "to save" when the day of the Lord arrives and their personal cosmos collapses.

**(D-3)** So unless the message of "this name" gets through their ears and "cuts to the heart," there is **no healing, no "name to call on,"** as the prophet Joel said, when the Day of the Lord comes and everything in our personal world crumbles.

The Good News—

**(P-3)** All the emphasis at Pentecost focuses on **Jesus as the "name that saves."** If he has undone death, and he has, then is there any dilemma where his Name will not save. The Holy Spirit at Pentecost takes a supportive role (exactly as Jesus says in John 14-16). Thus the HS moves Peter to put Jesus front and center to the very ones who had murdered him. This Name does not demand retribution from the murders. Instead of requiring self-sacrifice from us sinners, he offers His own self-sacrifice to us. Says Peter: **"The promise is for you."**

**(P-2)** This Name so proclaimed does **"cut to the heart." It turns hearts around, invites to baptism in that Name, to sins forgiven, to the gift of the Holy Spirit,** to full-scale healing of the person, and then to

**(P-1) a new way of living** (continuing to "hear the healing from Christ" and practicing an "**ethics of the Holy Spirit's healing**" in life's daily relationships in the Jerusalem congregation-even to new practices in worship life & economic life.

From this Grounding (with additional borrowing from Paul's Corinthians letters) we worked out a Spirit-test for testing the spirits.

A. The Key is the very words "Mekane Yesus" (Dwelling Place of Jesus) made into a question: "Does Jesus dwell here?"

B. When we encounter words, actions, experience, etc. that are clearly "spiritual," Christians are called (I John 4:1) to "test the spirits" encountered in order to determine whether that spirit is God's Holy Spirit.) The "Mekane Yesus" test will answer that question. Just ask: "Does Jesus dwell here?"

C. Where Christ dwells in spiritual experience we meet a Spirit who

- 1) is a Christ-pusher (*Christum treiben*), not a self-pusher;
- 2) replaces (not reinstates) legalism,
- 3) liberates (not binds) our conscience,
- 4) is Gift-with-gifts (and where the commanding verb is "offer", not "require.")
- 5) gives gifts that edify the church, not terrify or tear it apart,
- 6) promotes renewal in the Body of Christ in keeping with the "perpetual aim of the Gospel" (CA 28).

## **Holy Spirit: Old Testament and New**

Summary: GOD'S SPIRIT in the Old Testament, and the HOLY SPIRIT in the New Testament

In the OT God's spirit = God at work ("blowing" "breathing") to change things in the world, such as:

- 1) change chaos (non-world) into the world that is. Gen. 1
- 2) change non-living bodies into living persons.-Gen. 2, Ezekiel (dry bones chapter)
- 3) change from slavery to freedom (Exodus from Egypt)
- 4) change from having no-calling to being called by God for a special task (Judges, kings, etc.)
- 5) change from speaking just your own words to speaking God's Word (prophets)

In the NT God's HOLY SPIRIT does many of the same things. But the word HOLY added to Spirit always connects the Spirit's activity to Jesus Christ. Thus the actions of HOLY SPIRIT are always actions of salvation. For the word "Holy" means "healing" and the word "Jesus" means "God-is-saving."