

## The Charismatic/Pentecostal Movement in Norway: The Last 30 years



The Charismatic Movement in Norway is approximately 30 years old. In spite of the fact that various charismatic groups and/or phenomena have been analyzed from historical and theological perspectives, no history has been written taking the movement as a whole into consideration. Certainly, it can be debated whether the charismatic faith and practice found in Norwegian churches should or even could, be grouped together as one entity. "The movement" reflects a multitude of traditions from which the various groups trace their origin.

It would therefore be a matter of definition whether some of these groups should be categorized as "Pentecostal" or "Charismatic". The Faith Movement, for instance, and its alleged founder Kenneth E. Hagin, have deep roots within American Pentecostalism. Nonetheless, both Hagin and his successors in the U.S. recruit quite a few followers from within the Charismatic segment of Christendom, as do Norwegian Faith ministers. Outside of the Lutheran Church of Norway, *Oslo Kristne Senter* is Norway's largest local congregation. It recruits most of its adherents from the Lutheran Church and from the Pentecostal Movement. The recent fraternization between the Pentecostal Movement and the Faith Churches in Norway, complicates the issue further as to whether the Faith movement should be rightly categorized as "Pentecostal", "charismatic" or as neither. The problem is exemplified by a merger between a local Pentecostal congregation and a Faith church in the city of Trondheim.

In this article, I have chosen to let chronology be the deciding factor as to what is "charismatic" and what is not. This implies that the Faith movement and the Restorationist movement, both of which to a certain extent arose and developed outside of the Pentecostal Movement in Norway, will be categorized as "charismatic". Consequently, they fall within the scope of this article. My aim is to draw some historical lines from the start of the charismatic movement in the early 70s to the late 90s, while also highlighting a few distinct features of the development during the last decade. In this regard I will also make some critical remarks.

### *Charisma in a Lutheran Context*

The emergence of the charismatic renewal in Norway can possibly be dated to February 16<sup>th</sup> 1970. The place was the Grand Hotel in Oslo where the two Lutheran clergymen, Hans-Jacob Frøen and Hans Kristian Lier, testified to having had a charismatic experience exemplified by speaking in tongues. Frøen had received his Pentecostal experience back in 1938 while preparing for his career as a

minister within the Church of Norway studying at the Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology in Oslo (“Menighetsfakultetet”). So, when he during the late 60s, heard rumors about Lutheran clergy in the U.S. who spoke in tongues, he cried out to God: “Lord, let it come to Norway, as well.” Later, contact was established with Herbert Mjorud, an ex-lawyer who, after having received “Spirit baptism” in 1962, became one of the most prominent advocates of the charismatic renewal among Lutherans in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>

In 1970 Mjorud got his first preaching assignment in Norway. After a couple of public meetings, Mjorud announced that he wanted to reach more clergymen with the charismatic message. There was some uncertainty as to how best to approach these ministers successfully. Somebody suggested that a free lunch at the Grand Hotel might be a good approach. Even though only some 35 individuals showed up at the lunch, the two testimonies by Frøen and Lier, touched several of the attendants. Two days later, one could read the following boldfaced headlines on the front page of the Norwegian magazine *Morgenposten*: “Clergymen within the State Church: We speak in tongues.”<sup>2</sup>

Frøen had been serving a number of years in the Mission to Seamen in Oslo. In fact, he had served there since 1948 and had built up the Seamen's Church. He enjoyed a great deal of individual freedom and was, as he aptly expressed it, “his own bishop.” Beginning in 1970, he arranged regular “Deeper Life” conferences. Along with his sons he soon founded his own service agency, *Agape*, with the expressed intention of channeling the charismatic renewal into the Lutheran Church.<sup>3</sup> One of Frøen's sons had already gathered a group of teenagers and instructed them in how to do street witnessing. Now these youngsters for a brief period of time became part of *Agape*. But in 1972 many of them were drawn into what was to become *Ungdom i Oppdrag*, the Norwegian brand of the multi-denominational missionary organization *Youth With A Mission*. For quite a few years *Ungdom i Oppdrag* was allowed to function as an associate member under the *Youth With A Mission* umbrella while retaining their allegiance to confessional Lutheran theology. *Ungdom i Oppdrag* of today, however, is a full-fledged member of *Youth With A Mission* and is truly interconfessional both in faith and practice.

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert Mjorud, *Dare to believe* (Carol Stream, Illinois: Creation House, 1975).

<sup>2</sup> “Prester i Kirken: Vi taler i tunger,” *Morgenposten*, 18. feb 1970 p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> For an analysis of the theology of the *Agape* ministry, see Tormod Engelsviken, *The Gift of the Spirit and an Analysis and Evaluation of the Charismatic Movement from a Lutheran Theological Perspective*. Unpublished Ph.D. diss., Dubuque, Iowa 1981.

Frøen disbanded *Agape* in 1981. One of his reasons for this was that he did not want to serve as a competitor to other charismatic ministries within the broader Lutheran context. Competitor indeed he was, however, having rightly been referred to as “not as committed to all aspects of Lutheranism.”<sup>4</sup> Frøen has since severed his ties to the Church of Norway and is today a member of a local Pentecostal congregation.

Due to his lack of sense of allegiance to confessional Lutheran theology there were those who attempted to put pressure on *Ungdom i Oppdrag* in order for Frøen's sons to verbalize disagreement with their father and, more explicitly, their inability to endorse *Agape's* teachings on e.g. “Spirit baptism.” Partly due to strategic reasons Frøen's sons gave way to this pressure.<sup>5</sup>

Frøen's legitimate role as catalyst for the renewal within Lutheran Norway has to be emphasized. The same applies to the role of Hans Kristian Lier. He also got hold of the vision of spreading the renewal within the established Church. In 1970 he initiated “God has more to give” meetings in Bogstadveien Kapell in Oslo. The weekly Sunday night services were later renamed “Evangelical Forum” and attracted normally some 350-400 believers until they were discontinued in 1975. Alongside with several co-workers Lier later hosted so-called “Oase dager” (Oasis Days) in Misjonsaulaen. Dr. Willem van Dam's “Pastoraal Centrum Oase” in Rotterdam, Holland, inspired both the name “Oase” and the program itself, although van Dam's work was anchored in the Dutch Reformed Church. The program of Lier's “Oase dager” consisted of worship, Bible study, testimonies and intercession. From the very first gathering Misjonsaulaen was fully packed and at the most one could gather up to 500 believers.

The first “Holy Spirit Seminar” was arranged by a group of charismatic leaders in Oslo in 1977 and attracted some 1.200 believers. Similar seminars or conferences were later held throughout the country. Beginning in 1980 an annual summer conference was arranged and the Oase Foundation was formed with Jens-Petter Jørgensen as chairman.<sup>6</sup> Lier was not only heavily involved in what was to become the Oase movement, he was also, along with others, influential as a role model and as somewhat of a father figure for many teenagers who identified with

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Hocken, “Charismatic Movement.” Eds.: Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1988) p. 150.

<sup>5</sup> Hans-Jacob Frøen, interview dated 16.09.1994; Eivind Frøen, interview dated 15.03.1996; Arne Nordahl, interview dated 27.08.1998; Dag Stange, “Indremisjonen ut mot Ungdom i Oppdrag,” *Vårt Land* Jan. 20 1977 p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> The Norwegian-Charismatic Renewal in the Lutheran Church has already been thoroughly analyzed. Again I will direct the more interested reader to Engelsviken's *The Gift of the Spirit* (see note 3).

the Jesus Movement. In 1972 *Children of God* came to Norway. Lier was, to begin with, fascinated with their evangelistic zeal. He made sure the Americans got access to suitable localities in Oslo, and they immediately opened up the doors to the public and packed the place with 200 young people every night. Despite their zeal, however, it soon became apparent that everything was not as it should be. The Americans proclaimed the necessity of radical discipleship, which included the need to quit one's education or job in order to have a part in the "Jesus Revolution." Several of *COG's* proselytes dropped out of high school and with growing dissatisfaction Lier finally had to admit to himself that there were vital flaws within the Americans' discipleship concept. Perhaps as a reaction against their exaggerated radicalism he now initiated *Gospel Forum* where teenagers were offered Christian fellowship and an outlet for their evangelistic zeal without dropping out of school or severing their ties to their parents and siblings. After just a few months *Children of God* was told to abandon their headquarters. The work they had initiated was carried on by what would later be known as the *Guds Fred* (Peace of God) community. This evangelical ministry attempted to integrate the best from the Jesus Movement with allegiance towards Evangelical-Lutheran theology. Among *Guds Fred's* various activities, the Gospel Nights in Trefoldighetskirken attracted the most attention, gathering up to 2, 000 young people twice a month.<sup>7</sup>

### *Aril Edvardsen: catalyst for non-Lutheran charismatic renewal*

If Frøen and Lier were among the main catalysts for the Lutheran renewal in Norway, the same could be said about Aril Edvardsen for his role among *non-Lutheran* believers. Edvardsen testifies to having had a "born again" experience in 1956. Shortly afterwards he joined a local Pentecostal congregation. After his conversion he became an itinerant evangelist and claims in 1960 to have received a divine mandate as an evangelist with the entire world as his parish.

Edvardsen has gradually built up both a Bible School and offices for *Troens Bevis Verdens Evangelisering* (Evidence of Faith World Evangelism). In 1961 he became editor of the little magazine, *Troens Bevis* (Evidence of Faith). During the summer of 1964 he hosted his first summer conference in Kvinesdal which drew a crowd of some 1.200 followers for the evening sessions in addition to his 3 daily meetings with Bible teachings 9 days in a row. Since this first summer

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<sup>7</sup> Esther Marie Lier, interview dated 15.10.1997; Klara Lie, interview dated 27.10.1997.

conference this has become a yearly tradition in *Sarons Dal* (Valley of Sharon), Kvinesdal, and attracts thousands of believers from all over Scandinavia.

From the very beginning Edvardsen had a certain appeal also to Lutheran Christians. In 1963 his magazine *Troens Bevis* made mention of the Charismatic Renewal within the historical denominations in the U.S. 7 years later, from June 12<sup>th</sup> till 14<sup>th</sup> 1970, Edvardsen hosted a particular “Deeper Life” conference in *Sarons Dal*. Just as the earlier referred to lunch meeting at the Grand Hotel in Oslo could be said to usher in the Lutheran renewal, so Edvardsen's “Deeper Life” conference can in retrospect be seen as a catalyst for renewal within the *non*-Lutheran denominations. The conference was succeeded by the yearly summer conference in *Sarons Dal* which, in turn, was succeeded by various additional “Deeper Life” conferences all over Southern Norway. The Methodists, in particular, were deeply affected, both via the impulses from *Sarons Dal*, and partly also through their exposure to the Swedish Jesus Movement, which had its ministry base in Jutatorpet, Småland.<sup>8</sup>

### *Faith Teachings*

Although Aril Edvardsen today is closer to mainstream Christianity in Norway, and consequently primarily appeals to charismatic believers in the more established congregations, we can hardly ignore the fact that the first phase of his evangelistic ministry was strongly influenced by more radical undercurrents from American Pentecostalism. Many of the so-called “Faith ministers” owe a lot to Edvardsen who as early as 1961 actively promoted the most prominent advocates of the post- World war II healing movement (1946-59).<sup>9</sup> Edvardsen himself translated T.L. Osborn's *Healing the sick* into Norwegian in the early 60s. Through this book, Edvardsen's followers were introduced to the teachings of the late E.W. Kenyon. Osborn included not only long passages from several of Kenyon's books and pamphlets, but espoused an overall message based on the teachings of Kenyon. Through his writings he had the role of the ideological architect behind the teachings of the modern Faith Movement. It has been well documented that the alleged founder of the same movement, Kenneth E. Hagin plagiarized Kenyon's writings without being willing to credit his theological mentor.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ole Borgen, interview, dated 26.04.99.

<sup>9</sup> For further information on this healing movement, see David Edwin Harrell, *All Things Are Possible. The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1975).

<sup>10</sup> Daniel Ray McConnell, *A Different Gospel* (Peabody, Massachusetts:Hendrickson Publishers, 1988).

Several of Edvardsen's colleagues spent a year at Hagin's Bible School outside of Tulsa, Oklahoma. After their return to Norway some founded local Faith churches anchored in the teachings they received from Hagin. The criteria for calling a congregation a "Faith Church" may be difficult to determine, but it has been claimed that Norwegian Faith churches had a total membership of more than 8.000 believers, thus bypassing e.g. the Baptist Union of Norway.<sup>11</sup>

### *Restorationism*

One of the various charismatic "winds of doctrine" which Edvardsen cannot take responsibility for having introduced to Norwegian believers, is British Restorationism. However, Edvardsen while seeking to restore the New Testament apostolic office, still insists that the charismatic movement should be a Restorationist (not exclusively a Renewal) movement.<sup>12</sup> Erling Thu, who worked for Edvardsen in *Sarons Dal* from 1966 till 1975 has since the early 80s been considered as the representative in Norway of the Welsh brothers, Bryn and Keri Jones. Both are recognized as apostles in their own right in the circles where they minister. However, it is primarily Keri Jones who has taken an apostolic oversight over the *Kristent Fellesskap* (Christian Fellowship) churches in Norway, although also one of the Norwegian leaders, Noralv Askeland, is recognized as an apostle.

The British Restorationist movement has been analyzed in several writings.<sup>13</sup> A detailed presentation of the movement is therefore not considered necessary here. Briefly, its theological concern may be characterized as an effort to integrate Pentecostalism's fascination for the extraordinary Spirit manifestations with the ecclesiology of the Plymouth Brethren. The charismatic renaissance in the U.S. during the 60s, and in Norway a decade later, are often criticized by the Restorationists for its alleged tendency towards individualism, having to a large extent been preoccupied with the individual believers and their spiritual "needs." Being convinced that the New Testament itself does not open up for a variety of legiti-

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<sup>11</sup> Leif S. Jacobsen and Knut Tveit, "Kristensentrene/Trosmenighetene." Eds.: Peder Borgen and Brynjar Haraldsø, *Kristne Kirkers Trossamfunn* (Trondheim: Tapir Forlag, 1993) pp. 217-228. Also Frøen's *Agape* organization was positively affected by the teachings of Hagin. Frøen even had some of Hagin's pamphlets translated into the Norwegian language and published through his own publishing house, Agape Forlag.

<sup>12</sup> Aril Edvardsen, *Meg har Gud vist* (Kvinesdal: Logos Forlag, 1974) pp. 31-34, 195-215.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Hocken, *Streams of Renewal. The Origins and Early Development of the Charismatic Movement in Great Britain* (Washington D.C.: The Word Among Us, 1986) pp. 30-37; Andrew Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom. The Radical Sects of the House Church Movement* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988); Joyce V. Thurman, *New Wineskins. A Study of the House Church Movement* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1982).

mate church structures, the Restorationist advocates desire—as opposed to “those individualist charismatics”—to restore, not only the spiritual energy and vitality characterizing the early Church, but also to restore valid New Testament church structures with genuine apostles and prophets in charge. Through this, one expects the true Church of Christ to be better equipped to usher in the Millennium. The eschatology, at least among the leaders, reflects a break away from Pentecostalism's pretribulational premillennialism towards a postmillennial position. Quite a few of the leaders have received eschatological impulses via the American *Christian Reconstructionist* movement.<sup>14</sup> Generally, one seems to have drawn on a variety of traditions. Among these traditions are the ecclesiology of the late Watchman Nee of China,<sup>15</sup> and the Covenant emphasis which was reflected in the American *Shepherding movement*, which, with its strictly hierarchial church structure, threatened to tear the American renewal in two during the mid 70s.<sup>16</sup>

A somewhat softer Restorationist brand has also been introduced among Norwegian charismatics. It was often introduced among groups with a certain affiliation with the Jesus Movement of the 70s, but particularly among those who had struggled with their Lutheran heritage and rather wanted a restoration of the true Church of Christ patterned after their image of what the New Testament church looked like. This Restorationist brand has typically been more open towards maintaining relationship with believers from the historical denominations while *Kristent Fellesskap* on the other hand during the earliest phase of their existence took pride in proclaiming that they had no time for building bridges which they had no intention to cross.

### *Vineyard, “Toronto” and fascination with the prophetic*

One major concern of the early charismatic renewal was its vision for believers as tools in God's hands in order to fan the charismatic fire within the historical denominations. This vision is at variance with that of both the Faith and Restoration movements, in that the latter two are separatist in the sense that they favor the establishment of independent churches. Consequently, there is no wonder that

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<sup>14</sup> One of the most popular books has been David Chilton's *Paradise Restored. A Biblical Theology of Dominion* (Fort Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1988). For further information on *Christian Reconstructionism*, see H. Wayne House and Thomas D. Ice, *Dominion Theology. Blessing or Curse? An Analysis of Christian Reconstructionism* (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1988).

<sup>15</sup> Norman Howard Cliff, “The life and theology of Watchman Nee, including a study of the Little Flock movement which he founded.” M.Phil thesis, Open University 1983 pp. 320-325.

<sup>16</sup> For further information on the Shepherding/Discipleship Movement, see Seth David Moore, “The Shepherding Movement in Historical Perspective.” M.A. thesis, Oral Roberts University 1996.

quite a few charismatic leaders in Norway had a hard time when “Christian Norway” from the mid 80s suddenly experienced an almost explosive mushrooming of new and independent churches.

Many of them were opposed to the Faith ministers' proclamation of health (and wealth) as the believers' rights in Christ based on the same legal grounds as one's redemption from the wages of sin. Several felt more at home with the teachings of John Wimber, founder of the American *Vineyard* movement,<sup>17</sup> who took his point of departure in the “Kingdom of God” as a reality that was both “already” and “not yet”. This tension between the two dimensions of the Kingdom served for Wimber as a basis for explaining why not all people were healed and why there was still suffering in the world. In that respect the Bible provided a theology of power as well as a theology of pain.

The present professor at the Lutheran School of Theology in Oslo, Dr. Tormod Engelsen, studied one semester at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California in 1982 where he was introduced to C.P. Wagner and Wimber's course “Signs, Wonders and Church Growth.” Engelsen's positive experience with Fuller Seminary no doubt influenced the at that time leader of *Oase* in Norway, Jens-Petter Jørgensen, who three years later found himself under the tutorship of Fuller professors. Both Wimber himself and the faith/practices of the *Vineyard* movement had an effect that reached further than to the *leadership of Oase*. *Oase* participated as a host at the Scandinavian Leadership Conference in Gothenburg, Sweden in 1988 with Wimber as the main speaker. This same year *Vineyard* pastor Bob McGee participated as workshop leader during *Oase*'s summer conference in Norway. Not only *Oase* but also *Ungdom i Oppdrag* received regular input via American *Vineyard* pastors visiting during the mid 80s, among these were McGee, Andy Park and Jeff Kirby.

In 1992 the first Norwegian *Vineyard* church was established, *Oslo Vineyard* (officially accepted into the American denomination Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> 1993) with Kjell Aasmundrud as church founder. 7 years later there are still less than 5 *Vineyard* churches in this country with a total membership of less than 500. (The Norwegian *Vineyard* movement is structurally subject to the Swedish *Vineyard* movement and to the leadership of Hans Sundberg in Stockholm.) Nonetheless, this American denomination has recently gotten the critical attention of the media directed against it. This is primarily to be attributed to their identification with the so-called “Toronto Blessing” and to their fascination with “the prophetic.”

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<sup>17</sup> For further information on the history of the *Vineyard* movement both within the U.S. and in Norway, see Geir Lie, “*Vineyard-bevegelsen i USA og Norge - en kortfattet historikk.*” *Fast Grunn* (Oslo), Vol. 1 1999 pp. 45-52.



The former originated in what was then known as the *Toronto Airport Vineyard* church in Canada in 1994 and may in its appearance be characterized by certain unusual physical experiences which are subject to observation when believers are prayed for by laying on of hands. Engelsviken catches the essential features or “manifestations” when he writes:

It has to do with uncontrollable bursts of laughter and unconsolable weeping, with strong shaking and other physical movements, with falling to the floor and remaining there, with behaving like intoxicated without being so, and with more bizarre occurrences, such as producing certain animal sounds (e.g. roaring) or imitating certain animal behavioral patterns.<sup>18</sup>

Engelsviken claims in the same article, and rightly so as far as I can determine, that the “Toronto” phenomenon received a wide acceptance in the Norwegian free churches. The first exposure to this phenomenon seems to have occurred during the summer of 1994, when *Vineyard* pastors Bill Twyman and David Parker spoke at *Oase*'s summer conference as substitutes for a sick John Wimber. The two Americans, according to the religious newspaper *Vårt Land*, “brought with them falling, and bursts of laughter and of weeping through their preaching and intercession.”<sup>19</sup>

Those who have fronted the Norwegian “Toronto” phenomenon have no doubt been the independent charismatic *Kristkirken* (Christ Church) in Bergen, *Oslo Vineyard* and *Stavanger Inner Mission*. Even *The Mission Covenant Church of Norway* has been affected by the “Toronto” manifestations. As far as *The Baptist Union of Norway* is concerned, it has been claimed that the “Toronto” phenomenon “both literally and figuratively has produced powerful tremours” affecting about one sixth of their churches throughout Norway, “in varying degrees.”<sup>20</sup>

While the country's two largest Faith Churches, *Oslo Kristne Senter* and *Levende Ord, Bergen*, have expressed some reservations towards “Toronto,” several of the smaller Faith congregations have been far more receptive. The same goes for the *Kristent Fellesskap* churches.

In Oslo the Vineyard congregation has no doubt served as a catalyst in propagating charismatic ecumenism and revival optimism. On *Vineyard*'s initiative several of the charismatic pastors in Oslo have come together on a regular basis for mutual encouragement, fellowship and inspiration. In addition to their recogni-

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<sup>18</sup> Tormod Engelsviken, “Toronto-bevegelsen - siste nytt på vekkelsesfronten?” *Tidsskrift for Kirke, Religion og Samfunn*, hefte 2 1995 Årg. 8 p. 248. (My translation.)

<sup>19</sup> “Oase-ledere til Toronto,” *Vårt Land*, Aug. 9 1994 p. 18 (My translation).

<sup>20</sup> Jan Eikeland, “Toronto-vekkelsen ryster baptistene,” *Vårt Land*, Dec 6 1994 p. 6 (My translation).

tion of the validity of the “Toronto Blessing,” many have also supported the “Kansas City prophets.” Many Norwegian believers have also experienced “physical manifestations” after the “prophets” intercession. In addition, the “prophets” have delivered words of encouragement that Norway is just about to be struck with great revival and that a large percentage of the country’s population will be receptive to the Christian faith. These words of encouragement were widely accepted in various charismatic milieus, from *Oase* to traditional Pentecostal and independent charismatic churches.

Within the Faith movement a similar revival optimism may be evidenced, and is exemplified by Arnfinn Clementsen’s book *Norge tilbake til Gud* (Norway back to God). In this book the author predicts a change of the spiritual climate in the nation when those who receive a “born again” experience supposedly will “get their lives in shape, both physically and psychologically.”<sup>21</sup>

Historically this revival optimism can be explained as an essential *motif* both for the early Pentecostals around the beginning of this century and for the propagators of the so-called Latter Rain movement from 1948 onwards. They took their point of departure in the Old Testament reference to the Palestinian rain fall, the early rain which “enabled the grain to take root each fall,” and the latter rain “giving a quick final growth to ripen the grain for harvest.” This was interpreted allegorically: “The early rain, in this case, was the Day of Pentecost, and the events that flowed from that day to establish the church. The latter rain would fall at the end of the church age, to ripen the harvest before Christ’s return.”<sup>22</sup>

The so-called “prophetic movement,” the Faith Movement and the Restorationist movement, all have a common emphasis on the restoration of the charismatic offices such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers. This concern did not originate with early Pentecostalism, but was introduced by the Latter Rain advocates from 1948. It has been documented that despite the rejection of the Latter Rain movement by the Pentecostal denominational bodies, the former’s influence has nonetheless strongly affected the neo-Pentecostal, or charismatic movement of the 60s both as far as faith and practice are concerned. The influence can be seen by comparing the two traditions’ common emphasis on “personal [directive] prophecies” and on the availability of a particular “anointing” to communicate the endowment of spiritual gifts received through the combined efforts of prayer and laying on of hands. The early Pentecostals, however,

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<sup>21</sup> Arnfinn Clementsen, *Norge tilbake til Gud* (Hovet: Hermon Forlag, 1996) p. 58 (My translation).

<sup>22</sup> D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel. The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) pp. 30, 35.

claimed that the reception of Spirit baptism required “tarrying”, or prolonged preparatory prayer, and therefore opposed this position.<sup>23</sup>

*Genuine dedication to God, charismatic narcissism or a blessed mixture?*

We will end this overview by a few critical remarks. One visible feature of the charismatic/Pentecostal renewal of the 90s is that the confessional distinctives are minimized and charismatic believers find each other, not only (as previously) due to a common experience of Spirit endowment, but now also due to a common expectancy of national revival. Perhaps this charismatic-bonding tendency is partly to be attributed to a felt threat from the liberal forces within the established Church. These “forces” have, in the eyes of the charismatics, a low regard for Scripture, exemplified by their public stand on ethical issues. Because of this, they are seen as opponents in the charismatics' warfare against both secularization and spiritual decadence.

Another observation, which to this author appears far more disturbing, is the apparent anti-intellectual approach to one's own faith, exemplified by the fact that theological reflection hardly ever is being encouraged neither by leaders or lay people. Also the sometimes forced revival expectancy appears to lead to a somewhat manipulative application of technological and musical effects. This seems to happen not only in order to get the attention of the non-believers, but also (hopefully unconsciously) with the intention of appealing to fellow charismatic believers by producing an emotional atmosphere, which often is identified with God's supernatural and tangible presence. There is a danger of manipulating non-believers to “come to Jesus” on wrong and ethically illegitimate premises, as they are so caught up in their emotional “high” and forgetting to bring with them their rational “I” when the decision for or against Christ is to be taken. Indeed, even for the charismatic believers, their spiritual life may be jeopardized by active participation in such a worked up atmosphere. The emotionally loaded atmosphere, easily explained both psychologically and sociologically, is identified with a tangibly felt anointing from God's Spirit in order to convey His supernatural presence. No wonder that one's possibly original dedication to and affection for God with no preoccupation with what one may receive in return, after a while is replaced by a similar love and fascination for the emotional atmosphere one has learned to value as a genuine expression of God's supernatural intervention.

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<sup>23</sup> For further information on the “Latter Rain” accentuation, see Richard M. Riss, *Latter Rain. The Latter Rain movement of 1948 and the Mid-Twentieth Century Evangelical Awakening* (Mississauga, Ontario, Canada: Honeycomb Visual Productions, Ltd., 1987).

Hereby a superficial need is being produced within charismatic believers for constantly experiencing new “kicks” or emotional “highs”, all of which have their origin in manipulation with technological and musical effects.

As far as I can determine, much of charismatic life and practice of the 90s reflect a combination of (1) an increasing interest for and involvement in reaching the non-believing community and (2) a narcissistic aspiration for continual new spiritual “highs” in order to fill one's own emotional needs. Of course, I do not wish to imply that conscious or unconscious manipulation in itself is solely responsible for the emotional needs within charismatic believers.

One should be cautious not to idealize one's own past. But, as a participant in the charismatic renewal of the mid 70s I do have a problem accepting the present practice of repetitious chorus singing to rock'n roll rhythms, often beautifully accompanied by nice looking people on the platform singing three-part-harmony--all of this, with the supposed intention of “building up a throne for the Spirit of God,” i.e. opening up the meeting so that people may recognize His felt presence, manifested by signs and wonders. During the early years, didn't we participate in the worship of God with no thoughts on what we might receive in return? Or were we also back then just as caught up in our enthusiasm with those newly imparted manifestational gifts that also we were somewhat less concerned with the Giver?