

involvement of each worshiper and the fullest openness to God. In ministry, it means not only nor even chiefly the use of sign gifts, but the discerning and harnessing of all capacities to serve.

8. IMMATURITY. The charismatic movement is theologically immature, and its public speech and style seem on occasion half-baked as a result. Its exponents of renewal have not in every case learned to be consistently God centered, Trinitarian, and forward looking, and on occasion appear to be man centered and experience centered in their interests, tritheistic in their theology, and mindlessly mesmerized by the present moment, as children are.

The movement's intellectual and devotional preoccupation with the Holy Spirit tends to separate him from the Son whom he was sent to glorify and the Father to whom the Son brings us. The result too often is a concentrated quest for intense experiences, emotional highs, supernatural communications, novel insights, exotic techniques of pastoral therapy, and general pietistic pizzazz, not closely linked with the objectivities of faith and hope in Christ and the disciplines of keeping the Father's law. The charismatics' passion for physical and mental euphoria (health in the sense of feeling good and functioning well) reflects strong faith in the supernatural but feeble grasp of the moral realities of redemption, of the significance for our discipleship of self-denial, accepted weakness and apparent failure, and of the spiritual values that belong to hard thought, frustrated endeavor, pain accepted, loss adjusted to, and steady faithfulness in life's more humdrum routines.

What emerges, therefore, is intensity with instability, insight not always linked with intelligence, an oversimplified one-sidedness in spirituality, and an enthusiasm that is too often escapist. Thomas Small, theologian of the British renewal, sees all this as the result of not sufficiently focusing on the Father, and that is certainly part of the story; but I think it is part two rather than part one and that the root of the trouble is failure to focus sufficiently on the Jesus of the New Testament -- Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, who is man for God, our model of discipleship, as well as being God for man, our sin-bearing Saviour. I mean by that, not that charismatics do not trust, love, and worship Jesus -- to say such thing would be absurd -- but that they do not sufficiently grasp the link between what he was in his state of humiliation in this world and what his people, individually and corporately, are now called to be since Pentecost, as they were before (see Luke 14:25-33; John 15:18-16:4; Acts 14:22; Romans 8:17-23, 35-39; 2 Corinthians 4:7-18; 12:7-10; Hebrews 12:1-11). If I am right, this would be, ironically enough, a Spirit-frustrating, Spirit-grieving and Spirit-quenching feature right at the heart of this Spirit-exalting movement, and it would throw much light on the renewal's disconcerting tendency, underlined by Small, to run out of steam and get stuck.