

# Charismatic theology and spiritual baptism research paper examples

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## **Religious studies:**

Introduction

Charismatic theology

Research shows that a large number of self identified Christians in the world form part of the charismatic theology. This Christian theology is one that involves the practices as well as the beliefs that are similar to those of the Pentecostals and are mainly characterized by the use of spiritual gifts. The theology is mainly associated with is termed as baptism with the Holy Spirit and involves the empowerment of Christians with evidence seen through speaking in tongues. The charismatic theology which involves the charismatic Christians are associated with works involving use of spiritual gifts by, assisted by the Holy Spirit and also the use of miracles in modern day scenarios. Most Christians in the world follow these beliefs and have had a great impact on Christianity on a global scale. One other important aspect to consider in association with charismatic theology is the aspect of spirit baptism that is very important.

### **Association with spiritual baptism**

This aspect is one which involves the process by which a union is created between a Christian believer with Christ as well as other believers. This union is usually as a result of the Holy Spirit. It is an aspect that involves the process of joining believers with Christ and strengthening their faiths through the guidance of the holy spirit of God. It is then that believers get the chance to exercise their spiritual gifts in the provision of services for the work of God. This process also joins believers together and this is important in

developing oneness in believers and strengthening the unity of the church. Through baptism, believers die with Christ and rise again with him as new people but now saved and filled with the holy spirit of God and this process purifies the believers and segregates them from sin because of salvation and belief in God through Christ . Charismatic theology is highly associated with the process of spiritual baptism and is one of the factors that distinguishes it from the normal Christianity. This essay is therefore very important because it will try and analyze the aspect of spiritual baptism and its association with charismatic Christianity.

## **History of charismatic theology**

The theology traces its roots in the year 1959 with great impacts all over the world and has been considered as one of the most crucial and vital theology in the American religion. The theology is usually linked to ones man's action on one Sunday morning. This man is called Dennis Bennet. He announced to a congregation that he had become baptized in the Holy Spirit and could speak in tongues. This was in California in an Episcopalian congregation. His actions set influence all over the United States in protestant churches. The main thing to note about this spread is the rate because of the fact that it took a very short time for the influence to spread to other churches in the country. The theology was of great importance in the lives of Christians because it brought a new sense of spiritual renewal that strengthened their faiths and had them develop greatly as believers of God through Jesus Christ.

The manifestation of the Holy Spirit in Christians changed not only the spirituality but also their lifestyles characterized by increased provision of

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Christian services, more bible study, prayerfulness as well as increased stewardshipness. This aspect also strengthened the unity among the believers and one common characteristic was the aspect of praying together as a way of strengthening the prayers.

Over the years the charismatic theology has spread throughout the world and has gained influence on almost all churches in the world. The theology also had great influence on the Pentecostal theology that saw it grow to a very large extent. It is considered unique in terms of impact and spread and is unlike anything else in the history of religion. There have always been changes in religion in terms of establishment of movements but this one cut across many geographical boundaries as well as denominational boundaries and this aspect has led to its success in the spread throughout the whole world. The theology also saw the coming together of believers from different parts of the world from different backgrounds and this aspect led to development of conferences and meetings that led to the officiating and formalizing of the theology as part of the Christian religion and this has led to the increase in strength of the theology and its influence on Christianity in the world. One of the main important aspect associated with the theology and that has led to its great success is the aspect of development and the strengthening of the unity among believers. This aspect is very important because it was has brought people together in prayers and in Christian activities and has greatly facilitated the spread of the theology to the rest of the world. It is a desirable characteristic that that strengthen Christian faith which has made the theology break boundaries.

## **Spiritual baptism**

Spiritual baptism is an important aspect that comes subsequently after salvation and includes the full manifestation of the Holy Spirit and one of the signs of the presence of the Holy Spirit is the process of speaking in tongues. The experience is one of renewal and new birth in Christ. However, apart from speaking tongues there are other characteristics of spiritual baptism. The term charismatic came as a result of the association with spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts were one major aspect of the charismatic theology and were a factor of renewal by the Holy Spirit after baptism. These gifts are as described by the bible in the book of first Corinthians chapter 12 and verses 8 to 11. These gifts are usually as a result of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the believers. The charismatic theology set root and was characterized by the manifestation of the fruits of the holy spirits that include; speaking in tongues, visions, spiritual healing and performing miracles. These aspects became very common as the theology took strength as it spread, with many cases being identified in churches across the world. However, of all the gifts speaking in tongues is the one gift that has had great emphasis in the charismatic theology and is the one that has been experienced widely in the world. It is also the one that has met a lot of controversy through the need for justification of authenticity and association with the Holy Spirit.

The aspect of speaking in tongues has been very sensitive due to the fact that it is a source of lots of controversy in the world of religion. Most people consider it gibberish. According to the bible speaking in tongues is associated with receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit where there people

would not understand but the ones speaking would. The aspect has led to the development of studies on the subject for better understanding and justification. The aspect of the gifts of the Holy Spirit notably, speaking in tongues is through the guidance by the Holy Spirit into becoming something beyond oneself. The aspect of speaking in tongues is also importance because of the fact that it strengthens the union during prayers.

The other important aspect of the spiritual baptism is the process of baptism in the Holy Spirit that is a process of renewal into a new life in Christ and by the holy spirit of God. The aspect of baptism is supported by the bible in the books of Mathew, Mark, Luke and John, in the story of the baptism of Jesus Christ by John the Baptist. During this time Jesus was baptised in the river and received the Holy Spirit in the form of the sky opening and the descent of a dove. The aspect of baptisms important because of the fact that it was until this process that Jesus began his work. The process of receiving the Holy Spirit is not automatic with belief in Jesus Christ; it is usually associated with lots of prayers and sometimes a spontaneous.

The process of receiving the Holy Spirit is completes the faith of the Christian when coupled with baptism and so it cannot be complete without it, i. e., baptism without receiving the Holy Spirit. This aspect is very important for the charismatic theology because of the fact that receiving the Holy Spirit after baptism increases the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in a Christian and leads to the strengthening of the Christian faith. It as an attribute seen in the book of acts after the ascension of Jesus Christ where the disciples received the holy spirit during Pentecost as they were together and began to speak in tongues. During the time, Jesus had left them the Holy Spirit that would

guide them in their faiths and give them the gifts of the Holy Spirit which would help in spreading the word of God and helping people through performing miracles.

It is clear of the importance of baptism in the Holy Spirit and the spread of the word to other people as by Jesus' instructions to the disciples. This is important because faith travels by the process of hearing and this creates the need for spread of gospel about Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. This aspect is important in the strengthening of believers. As explained before receiving the Holy Spirit is not always automatic but can be spontaneous. However, this aspect leads to the development of distinctions between believers where there are those that are believers but have not received and the believers that have received. This aspect is important because it results to the process of ranking of believers and can sometimes lead to discrimination among Christians which would then lead to division among them.

However, this aspect of division is not based on classes developed but by the distinction developed as a result of before receding and after receiving and is associated with the level of spirituality associated with the biblical teaching by an individual, meaning the aspect of receiving Christ would depend on the an individual's determination to understand biblical teachings and use the as guides for strengthening their faiths as Christians. From this explanation the division can now be explained in the perspective of before and after receiving the Holy Spirit but can also lead to establishment of different points of view that are conflicting.

## **Challenges faced by the charismatic theology**

One of the main challenges that are as a result of differing points of view is the determination of salvation and its association with the receiving of the Holy Spirit through baptism. With the charismatic theology, speaking in tongues is one aspect that is very important as an indicator of manifestation of the holy spirit as well as confirmation of salvation and thus establishes the ones that are unable to speak in tongues as lacking proper salvation . This aspect has greatly led to division in perspectives between different churches, one of them being the Lutheran church of America that believes salvation is not always associated with speaking in tongues. However, a point of clarification in these beliefs has resulted to the influence of the Lutheran church on the charismatic moment and involved the clarification of salvation in relation to speaking tongues. This explicitly established the aspect of baptism in the Holy Spirit and associated it more with sanctification rather than the specific aspect of speaking in tongues that has been very controversial .

This aspect brought more understanding among different churches and led to increased influence among these churches which influenced the adoption and spread of the charismatic theology. The understanding of the aspect of baptism in the Holy Spirit is very important because of its sensitive nature in terms of salvation as well as sanctification. The aspect of renewal in Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit is important for the Christian life that leads to the full manifestation of the Holy Spirit and the acquisition of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to aid in the process of spreading the word of God to the masses. Spiritual baptism is involved in the process of renewal in a believer. This



process result to development of gifts that facilitate for evangelism and key to this process is the good guidance by the Holy Spirit that is now fully manifesting within Christians. Faith spreads through hearing and evangelism leads to the effective spread of the word of God to the masses and which tries to develop unions with believers and strengthen their faiths. Here, there are three important factors to note. First is a Christian belief in God and Christianity that stands distinctively. The second factor is the process of baptism and the third is the process of receiving the Holy Spirit. All these factors are important in the Christian faith and most importantly, they are very much emphasized in the charismatic theology. All the three factors are attributes of renewal in the life of Christ.

The charismatic theology was greatly influenced by the Pentecostals and has been considered similar to it but avoid direct association with it because of differences in cultures as well as theology. The idea associated with it being the process of renewal through spiritual baptism. This aspect has been met by lots of controversies involving the need for justification of legitimacy most notably on the authenticity of the process of speaking in tongues.

The whole controversy involving the aspects between salvation and the baptism in the holy spirit with some doctrines depending on the notion that once a person gets saved, the holy spirit resides in them while the charismatic theology adds the aspect of spiritual baptism that sees more manifestation of the holy spirit meaning that those following the charismatic theology believe in more spiritual strength than the other churches. This factor is also brought out by the belief by some people that there exists a secondary experience as far as association with the Holy Spirit is concerned. This

secondary experience is what has led to the development of the charismatic theology with defence mainly as a result of the fact that this experience has seen great positive changes in the lives of the Christians such as increased stewardshipness, prayerfulness and increased spiritual strength. This aspect has also seen the increased unity among believers and the church as a whole and has also led to great improvements in the lifestyles of the believers. These factors associated with the secondary experience have been what has led to the great influence of the charismatic theology in the beliefs of many Christians in the world and has transformed Christianity through influence on many churches.

Another factor is the support from the bible for example during Pentecost after Jesus had ascended. The receiving of the Holy Spirit prepares individuals for evangelism through teaching of the word of God to the masses through preaching, and performing miracles. However, two important facts arise and these are salvation and baptism in the Holy Spirit . Between these two, which comes first? According to the above analysis, spiritual baptism is as aspect associated with secondary experience with the Holy Spirit, meaning that it comes after salvation. However, this secondary experience bears more powers attributed to the gain of the fruits of the Holy Spirit .

## **Conclusion**

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