

...FOR THOSE SEEKING THE EMPOWERING PRESENCE OF THE *Holy Spirit*

# LutheranRenewal

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## Giving Oversight to a *move of God*

by Paul Anderson

Janet was recently filled with the Spirit and radically changed overnight. Joy replaced depression, and she couldn't stop talking about her new life in the Spirit. She even visited the church council and gave them a prophetic word, confirming to the elders her emotional instability. Janet, feeling resistance from Pastor Swanson, soon formed a clique with others who resented his laid-back leadership. A year later, Janet and her band of charismatics left and started a new church.

This fictitious story has happened countless times. People with no lack of zeal want to move fast in the things of the Spirit, and the leadership tries to rein them in. Here are some mistakes I have observed that ministers make in attempting to bring peace:

- They feel intimidated, unable to handle those they consider hyper-spiritual.
- They come on too strong and discourage those they need to counsel.
- They go public, either too soon before they understand, or too late when the division created by those they consider ultra-charismatics has gone beyond repair. They don't address the problem in a healthy, timely, and straightforward manner.
- They don't listen carefully to those newly alive in the Spirit to identify with their passions. They assume that they know what is going on when they don't.
- They give a right corrective word but in the wrong spirit, and thus create resentment.

- They react with fear to manifestations of the Spirit, not understanding them.
- They call something fleshly that could be of the Spirit. They mistake pride for passion and bring wounding.
- They take an adversarial role rather than that of a friend or a father.

On the other side, people who are filled with the Spirit can create disunity when...

- They absolutize their encounter, wanting everyone to experience what they have.
- They think everyone is against them, so they respond with criticism.
- They assume maturity because of their experience, misunderstanding the difference between the gifts and fruit of the Spirit.
- They want all to move at their pace, not waiting for others to catch up.
- They attempt to produce manifestations of the Spirit.
- They do not receive correction well because of their insecurity or because it is not accurate on every point.



### Lutheran Renewal

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- They assume that they have rights beyond what others possess.
- They try to secure a platform for their “ministry.”
- They do something offensive because “the Spirit told them,” like giving a prophetic word during the offering or speaking in tongues in the foyer.
- They develop techniques they think others should follow, like ways of laying on hands or praying. They assume that their charismatic experience gives them authority.
- They develop outside heroes they trust more than their inferior leaders.

Too bad that Janet could not have gone to the pastor, shared her experience, and asked for help in walking it out. Too bad that Pastor Swanson and the leaders reacted to her zeal rather than responding with wisdom.

After the painful division, leaders often back away from the life of the Spirit for a safer environment that is easier to control. The Bible compares the work of the Spirit to a river. Jesus said that the water of the Spirit would flow out of our inner beings. When the water moves from a trickle to a river and the devil sees that he cannot stop the flow, he will attempt to make it run over its banks, as was happening with Janet. We may pray for a torrent,



but when it comes, we’re not always sure what to do. We are tempted to grab the reins from the Spirit, but on the other hand, we’re maybe too threatened to give oversight. We must build banks, which means both encouraging people to get in the river (rather than staying on the banks as many leaders do) as well as providing proper banks for its flow. How can we do that? By understanding that...

**Emotions have a place.** God created them to help us respond appropriately to life. We thank God for Janet’s deliverance from depression. Emotions do not lead the way, but they make us participants rather than spectators. We are commanded to love God with our whole being. Love void of emotion turns boringly

objective. While the cold and comfortable are quick to point out emotional excesses during a move of God, their lack of fire condemns them. We will experience plenty of emotion and even some excess when the water is flowing, and it should neither alarm us nor intimidate us. Good leaders teach that healthy emotions follow on the heels of truth rather than leading the way. Leaders must also thank God for the Janets who are challenging their low level of zeal.

**Fruit and gifts are both needed.** Gifts are given in a moment, while fruit takes time to develop. Janet wrongly assumed that her newly received gifts gave her a platform for authority. We need both fruit and gifts to fly with two wings, the supernatural character of Jesus, as well as the supernatural ministry of Jesus. Paul writes. “Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts” (1 Cor. 14:1). Resisters often say, “We need the fruit, not the gifts.” But Paul only sets the two at odds when the gifts are manifest without regard to the fruit of love, a common experience in the Corinthian church and echoed with



Janet. Zealous people must let their character catch up with their charisma! Janet’s defensive posture kept her from receiving what she desperately needed.

**“FOLLOW THE WAY OF LOVE and eagerly desire spiritual gifts**

1 Corinthians 14:1

**Process follows crisis.** Birth, an event, leads to growth, a process. We need the event—once, but then we need to walk it out, not look for another birth experience or spiritual fix. Paul writes, “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him.” People looking for a fresh encounter with the Spirit may need it to jar loose encrusted habits, but then they need to apply spiritual disciplines and put one foot in front of the other.

**Faith and presumption are different.** Faith does not work independent of the Word or the counsel of mature Christians schooled in the Scriptures. Faith is initiated by God and grows by hearing the Word of God. The need does not determine the call—God does. To pay a visit to the local hospital and pray for all the patients as Janet and her friend wanted to do may sound like a great idea, but only God ideas prove to be good ideas. Janet’s excitement did not guarantee that God was behind her or that others needed the same zeal she possessed. Because one articulates his or her

faith better (or louder) does not grab heaven's attention as much as character does. Leaders must be prepared to temper passion with reality, lest faith moves into presumption.

Prayer meetings can get off center by eager folks who like to control: "I feel the Lord telling us we need to kneel and confess our sins." A leader must discern if such directives seem appropriate at the time. He might say, "Thanks, Jeremy. We may do that later. I just want to stick with where we are now." Pastoring gives security to people who are afraid that things could get out of hand from the vocal ones. At the same time, we accept the Spirit's freedom to interrupt a meeting at any time and through anyone. So we need to ask, "Holy Spirit, are you responsible for what is happening now?" Ultimately, the Lord remains in charge, not the leadership.

At the same time, we don't interpret "interruptions" as more spiritual moments than if things go according to our plans. Some people understand liberty as when the pastor throws away his notes and really "lets the Spirit lead." Freedom is where the Spirit is given access, not where someone offers a free prayer or a stirring prophetic word.

**Faith leads to experience.** Faith precedes experience—and produces it. We don't live by experience, but by faith we enter into the experience of God. "By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land" (Hebrews 11:29). "By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days" (v. 30). So we don't shy away from experience when we are encountering God; we desperately need it. And yet leaders must discern when experience is being produced in the human soul rather than being received by faith. Unwholesome zeal burns out like an engine

running too long too fast.

Worship, for instance, sometimes causes

people to get

## "BY FAITH

**the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days.**

Hebrews 11:30

religious, like they need to try hard to do a good job or convince God to show up.

**Prophecy is weighed.** The Word of God is without error and the canon of Scripture is complete. Present-day prophesies, however, must be evaluated. Words are established by the testimony of two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15; II Cor. 13:1). Paul wrote, "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what

is said" (I Cor. 14:29). "Test the spirits to see whether they are from God" (I Jn. 4:1). This means that the Body both tests what is given (like a prophetic word) and the one who gives us. Does it ring true? Does it bear witness with my spirit? Am I being pushed by this person's spirit? Does this word agree with the Word of God? Does it build up? Does it produce good fruit? Is this person's life in order? Paul writes, "Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil" (I Thess. 5:19-22). Janet wanted her prophecy to the church council to be accepted, not weighed. They, however, felt manipulated and judged and did not receive it. It flunked the test in I Cor. 14:3 of being encouraging or comforting.

**Manifestations are accepted.** They often increase during times of God's moving, such as in the early American revivals. This guideline arose out of the Toronto blessing: do not promote, prevent, or perpetrate. Sometimes after a revival subsides, people longing for the same manifestations may keep them going in the flesh. Paul encourages us not to douse the fire but neither to let it go unchecked. So testing the work of the Spirit does not grieve the Spirit. Toronto leaders found that isolating a distracting manifestation helped to test its genuineness. Those who did not need a stage continued what they were doing.



Manifestations such as shaking or falling down indicate an encounter with the Almighty. We should not be surprised if we have a physical response when God touches our lives in a significant way. We do not make a manifestation normative or turn an experience into a habit. We receive manifestations; we don't produce them. We need to live comfortably with the ebb and flow of the Spirit. We do not control the Spirit; we respond to its moving. Manifestations are a potential evidence that the Spirit is at work, but they do not indicate spirituality or maturity. We look for the fruit rather than analyzing the experience. To give undo attention to a manifestation can either glorify it on the one hand or "weird it out" on the other.

*continued on page 7*

He who promised  
is faithful

Holy Spirit Conference  
August 6-9, 2008

*Paul Anderson, Director of Lutheran Renewal*



*Two of the Youth workshop  
presenters*





At the Children's Conference

**“Let us hold  
unswervingly  
to the hope we profess,  
FOR HE WHO  
PROMISED IS FAITHFUL.”**

Hebrews 10:23



*“I am free to dance”*



To see this prophetic painting, “beloved”:  
[www.DesignStudios-Inc.com](http://www.DesignStudios-Inc.com)

## Testimonies

from "He Who Promised is Faithful," August 6-9, 2008



"Mahesh Chavda called out my name, 'There is a young lady in the audience by the name of Joanna. The Lord has healing for you.' And right away, I felt the power of the Lord come over me. I just was overcome by God's presence and could not stand. I fell back in my seat and sensed a weight over me. Moments later I had two sharp, cramping pains in my lower abdomen. I'm guessing it was my kidneys, since that is what is affected by Dengue Fever. Since that night, I've been 100% better. No fainting spells, no light headedness, I'm not weak, and no pain!"



"We left on Saturday evening feeling blessed, healed, restored, refreshed, confident and released. When we made the last turn toward our farm, the Northern Lights were dancing over our farm as if to say, 'You are released—released from the pain and to advance the Kingdom.'" (Editor's note: the theme artwork included the depiction of Northern Lights.)



"A pastor asked if my granddaughters (7 and 10 yrs. old) wanted to receive the Holy Spirit, and the girls said "yes!" Breakthrough has taken place, the healing has begun, and what the Lord has started will not be stolen!"



"I want to tell you the Holy Spirit conference was the best conference we have been to in a decade! The testimonies were awesome and there was an air of expectancy with Holy Ghost electricity permeating the church."



"I could write pages of all that the Lord has uprooted and planted. I feel like I've been through Extreme Makeover—Life Edition. I pray these all bring about fruitfulness in the coming days and weeks."



"...the Conference was absolutely incredible! I have been attending for quite a number of years now, and this one stands out...He also started a major healing in my immune system, which became evident as I attended every session and workshop during the Conference. That is something that was always too exhausting for me and I would often end up sick, even with limiting my attendance. At the conference I was also healed of floaters in my eyes during Jay West's workshop. Besides all the physical healing, He has also done more inner healing that has freed me in areas I thought I already was free...gotta love our Awesome God!"



## Plan Ahead!

### EQUIPPING CONFERENCE

St. Paul, MN

February 6-7, 2009

John and Carol Arnott

### WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

St. Paul, MN

April 17-18, 2009

"Tending Your Field of Dreams"

Judith MacNutt

### HOLY SPIRIT CONFERENCE

St. Paul, MN

August 5-8, 2009

 **Lutheran**Renewal

### onething Twin Cities

October 10-11, 2008

at Hosanna! Lutheran Church  
Lakeville, MN

a movement of young adults  
living for only one thing

To answer all your questions  
and to register FREE:

[www.ihop.org/onething](http://www.ihop.org/onething)

(part of the International House  
of Prayer)

None of us likely thought it strange that Jeremiah's bones trembled or that he acted like a drunk man (Jer. 23:9). He explained it as the action "of the Lord and his holy words." Nor did we think it unduly strange that the disciples on Pentecost should be accused of being drunk (Acts 2:14), or that John should fall in the presence of the exalted Christ (Rev. 1:17).

**What about excessive zeal?** To a dead church, any sign of spiritual life looks excessive. When I returned from Toronto with some of the leaders from our church, a few people wondered about the excesses that occurred. I responded, "We could use a few excesses around here. The number one liability of Norwegian Lutherans is not excess." (And we were not a dead church!) When the real fire comes, it will burn around the edges, and we will need to deal patiently with excess. We respond to exuberance by building banks, not dams. We do not grow irritated with the Janets; rather, we help them interpret and walk in their experience of the Spirit.

**Pastoring a fresh move of the Spirit** challenges the most mature leader. Paul dealt with true and false revival spirits in both Corinth and Thessalonica. From him we learn that...

**1. Revivals get messy.** We cannot expect them to happen within the borders of our personal decorum. God has chosen to work through frail human beings, who mix the flesh with the Spirit. That just goes with the territory. No one has ever flowed with the gifts in an absolutely pure stream but Jesus. This demonstrates the mystery and humility of God to use imperfect vessels.

## **"MAKE PLANS BY SEEKING ADVICE; if you wage war, obtain guidance.**

Hebrews 11:30

That's why we sift prophecy. So we don't express irritation when we hear an off-the-wall prophetic word. If necessary, we speak a private, gentle, corrective word. If it did not agree with the Scriptures, we may need to go public, but we do it with meekness.

**2. We cannot control the Spirit.** We can only adjust ourselves to its moving. People into control are unwilling to do that. Revivals have been shut down by people too uncomfortable with the Spirit's agenda to let Him have His way. We heed Paul's double-edged admonition of caution on the one side and excessive freedom on the other. Pastors often struggle from a deep insecurity with regard to the life of the Spirit, especially when they lack personal experience. Two

solutions could be suggested: first, they need to remain childlike in their ministry and on the receiving end of the Spirit's moving in their lives so they are familiar with some of the ways that the Spirit operates. Second, they should visit sites away from their own turf where they can gain experience, such as renewal conferences, retreats, and ministry trips.

**3. We decide based upon the group.** If an individual's words or actions do not mix with the group and we discern that the group is not resisting the Spirit but seeking to be open, we correct the individual rather than remaining silent. Some may think that they are being led to "offend" others because of the group's apparent passivity or insensitivity to the Spirit. My experience in renewal says that this response is often a divisive spirit of well-meaning people who push ahead of God. The offense is the cross of Jesus Christ, not my activity running counter to how the Spirit has been working with a particular group. When Jesus spoke about bringing a sword rather than peace, He was referring to "enemies" (Matt. 10:36), those unwilling to follow Christ (v. 38), not believers who have a different outlook regarding the Spirit.

**4. We show flexibility.** Paul adjusted the way he operated depending upon the group he sought to connect with, whether Jews, those not under the law, or the weak. He wasn't being wishy-washy. His bottom line was connecting for the sake of the gospel.

Where individuals are afraid of grieving the Spirit by not being obedient, they should let the leadership weigh their perceptions. Scripture accents the wisdom of moving corporately rather than against the stream: "Make plans by seeking advice; if you wage war, obtain guidance" (Prov. 20:18). Individuals who submit their personal nudges to the counsel of wise friends are learning the difference between independence and interdependence.

There does come a time when a split must be accepted. Perhaps the church tradition cannot make room for the life of the Spirit and Janet must leave. Or maybe Janet has moved beyond teachability. Hopefully, leaders can learn to build good banks and allow the Spirit to move freely.





# Called Home—Dick Denny

August 6, 1923 - July 13, 2008

*"With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes!"*  
(Psalm 119:10-12)



A talk with Dick Denny invariably involved reference to one or more of the hundreds of Bible verses he knew by heart. For Dick, mentioning an appropriate Scripture was as natural as breathing. The Bible was his book of life.

It was not always so. Dick was a successful businessman. He and his wife, Betty, were Sunday pew tenants. Tragedy struck their family through the death of their son, Rick, in Vietnam. The Lord spoke His transforming word into their sorrow and into their lives. Dick sold his business and put his time and talent at the Lord's disposal for the rest of his life.

He served successively in a variety of ministries. He served in the ministry of LEM (Lutheran Evangelistic Movement). He served as a lay assistant on the staff of North Heights Lutheran Church. He served as director of LCRS (Lutheran Charismatic Renewal Services), then as director of national ministries when LCRS was merged into ILRC (International Lutheran Renewal Center). During the 1970's and 1980's he served as managing director of ILCOHS (International Lutheran Conference on the Holy Spirit), drawing upwards of 25,000 people to its annual meeting in the Minneapolis auditorium. For many years he led a Sunday evening Prayer and Praise Service at North Heights Lutheran Church.

For many people, the Denny home became a launching pad for spiritual renewal. Through Bible study groups and personal counseling Dick and Betty extended to others the same invitation the Lord had extended to them: to take Him at His word, believe His promises both for life and for growth in grace. Over 2,000 individuals attended their home Bible studies.

As his gift for teaching unfolded, Dick was in demand as a Bible Study leader and as a speaker at conferences and congregational missions around the country. Clergy and laity alike tuned in to his practical portrayal of new life in Christ. He authored two books that presented the same down-to-earth understanding of the Christian faith that marked his personal life.

Though he had a natural evangelistic knack (he could introduce an unbeliever to Christ in short order!), his particular burden was for Christians who "sit down on their salvation and never grow." For Dick, being a Christian involved a lifetime of growth and development. The Christ who saves is the Christ by whose indwelling power the believer abides and grows day by day.

Thank you, Dick, for your faithful testimony,  
Larry and Nordis Christenson  
*Larry is the former Director of Lutheran Renewal*