

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME
GRADUATE PROGRAM IN LITURGICAL STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY
NOTRE DAME, INDIANA 46556

April 2, 1975

Most Reverend Leo Pursley
P.O. Box 390
Fort Wayne, IN 46801

Dear Bishop Pursley:

As one of the "founding fathers" of the Catholic Pentecostal (Charismatic) Movement at Duquesne University and at the University of Notre Dame in 1967, I feel compelled in conscience to draw your attention to a series of deviations within the Pentecostal Movement that I think are documented and substantiated in the enclosed testimonials of five former members of the True House Community of South Bend, Indiana. Their experiences are, I feel, in many ways typical, not only of the now disbanded True House, but of the Movement as a whole and demand the kind of canonical and theological investigation that might bear fruit before more serious harm is accomplished. I myself withdrew from the Movement several years ago but I have remained fairly closely associated with many of its manifestations and I feel that the Movement shows several dangerous tendencies that require the most serious pastoral and theological guidance and correction.

I am particularly concerned that the Pope not be unduly influenced by the International Conference to be held in Rome this June. A large group of pious pilgrims may well make it appear to him that this is a fully Catholic Movement and since, I feel, that it will not bear careful theological scrutiny, he would be well advised to disassociate himself from it, at least for the present. If the Pope were drawn to endorse the Movement prematurely and without further investigation he would, in my opinion, both be led astray personally and be in grave danger of misleading the Church as a whole.

The Pentecostal Movement needs careful, responsible and vigorous criticism, and it needs it now. It has had a very good press in the past few years and has come to resent all criticism. If it is truly of God, it will not be harmed by a top-level theological investigation. If, on the other hand, deviant tendencies are discovered within the Movement, it may be able to correct them before it is too late.

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Such a theological commission, should, I feel, particularly look into the Movement's exaggerated supernaturalism, its strange and misleading terminology in regard to tongues, prophecy, baptism in the Spirit, etc., its rash and unwarranted use of exorcism, its fundamentalist and superstitious use of the Holy Scriptures ('cracking the Bible'), its undue emphasis on prayer meetings as opposed to the liturgy, the steady growth of para-clergy, its reckless employment of coercion in matters of conscience, and its illuminist elitism.

As a movement of religious enthusiasm, the Catholic Pentecostal Movement needs diligent examination by competent ecclesiastical authority in order to put the Movement on a sound basis so that the simple faithful will not be led astray by a false or, at least, dangerous teaching.

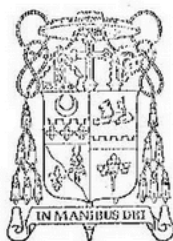
Above all, dear Bishop, I urge you to use your influence with the Holy See of Rome to prevent the Pope from endorsing the Movement prematurely and, in particular, from celebrating the Pentecost Mass, 1975, for the International Conference in Rome.

Because of the importance of the issues involved, I am sending a copy of this letter to your Auxiliary, Bishop Joseph P. Crowley, to Bishop Joseph McKinney, the Episcopal Moderator of the Catholic Pentecostal Movement, Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin, Archbishop Jean Jadot, the Apostolic Delegate, Cardinal Benelli, the Secretary of State, Cardinal Suenens, Cardinal Wright; to Father Frederick McManus, Father Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B., Dr. Ralph Keifer, Dr. Kevin Ranaghan, and to Dr. Bertil Ghezzi, the Editor of New Covenant, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Yours very sincerely in Christ,


William G. Storey
Associate Professor of Theology
Director, Graduate Program in
Liturgical Studies
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

WGS:bph



DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND

POST OFFICE BOX 390 • FORT WAYNE, INDIANA 46801
April 7, 1975

Professor William G. Storey
Graduate Program in Liturgical Studies
Department of Theology
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

Dear Professor Storey:

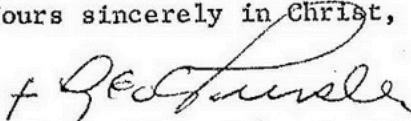
I have just read your letter of April 2nd and I intend to review most carefully the enclosed statements from former members of the Pentecostal (Charismatic) Movement. I wish to thank you most sincerely and assure you that I value highly this authentic and articulate testimony in support of my own efforts to deal with this difficult problem, made more difficult by the appearance of high prelates of the Church in connection with the movement at Notre Dame University in recent years.

As you know, I have consistently refused to give any public approval of this movement, though I have not found reason to impugn the sincerity of participants known to me. A few months ago I had a long letter from Father Edward O'Connor requesting me to attend the prayer meetings and related activities of the several charismatic groups in this Diocese so that I might be better informed and better able to offer direction. The difficulty with that approach is obviously that my association with the movement would become immediately, in the minds of many, an unqualified endorsement and would tend to encourage others to join on the strength of that seeming endorsement.

I am aware of the dangers pointed out in your letter and I will act upon your recommendations, particularly in urging that this matter be brought to the attention of the Holy Father in view of his requested participation in the forthcoming International Conference in Rome next June. I share fully your apprehensions and hope devoutly for a happy outcome of your efforts.

With renewed assurance of my profound thanks and devoted personal regards, I am

Yours sincerely in Christ,


Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend

June 23, 1975

Most Reverend Leo Pursley
P. O. Box 390
Fort Wayne, IN 46801

Dear Bishop Pursley:

I am completely floored by your statements, as quoted, in the Newsweek report on Pentecostalism. I really can't believe that you made such statements in light of your personal letters to me and to Dr. Ford. I certainly hope you did not make them because I would feel that my initiatives, taken at considerable personal cost, have been almost utterly useless.

Yours very sincerely in Christ,


William G. Storey
Director

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