



DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND

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April 7, 1975

Your Eminence
Jean Cardinal Villot
Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano
Vatican City, Europe

Your Eminence:

A strict sense of duty prompts me to ask you
to read the enclosed communications and take what seems to me
the necessary action requested.

Yours faithfully and fraternally in Christ,

MOST REV. LEO A. PURSLEY, D.D.,
Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend

LAP/jz

In the past eight years, the International Charismatic Renewal has come to involve more than 100 thousand people. From the very beginning of this movement, the persons involved have congregated annually in June for a three-day conference to discuss their plans for the future. This year this conference is to be held in Rome. With its ever-increasing membership and with the Rome setting, the Charismatic Renewal is becoming more and more a visible and powerful movement in Church affairs. It is because of this growing power and influence of the Charismatic Renewal movement that the author of this statement feels it is necessary to bring to the attention of the Church authorities some of the less savory activities of the Charismatic Renewal groups.

I myself was a member of True House- a Charismatic community in South Bend, Indiana- for two years. I initially became involved with the group around Thanksgiving of my freshman year at the University of Notre Dame. Prior to becoming a member of the True House community, I had had a relatively normal, Catholic, and only slightly traumatic childhood and adolescence. I had been blessed with a good family; had done well in school, etc. My life in True House, however, was anything but normal or non-traumatic. I was frequently involved in political intrigues against church officials; and was myself exposed and then exposed others to extremely questionable psychological and pastoral ministry techniques administered by untrained, non-ordained men.

The charismatics have a bad habit of diagnosing common ordinary personal neuroses as serious psychological and spiritual problems. In my own case, tensions that had developed between my father and myself during my childhood and adolescence were accentuated to the point of

creating a rift between us. Whatever interests in scholarship I held were condemned as excessive and distracting to the spiritual life. Whatever ambition and self-confidence I possessed were condemned as prideful, unspiritual attitudes.

While part of the renewal I was placed under a "pastoral ministry team". The purpose of this team was to assist the members of the community (True House) in "overcoming the obstacles to the spiritual life". While under the care of this pastoral ministry team, I was- among other things- exorcized*, forced to submit to the absolute authority of the community coordinators, and forbidden to read any books, papers, or magazines except those "pertaining to the spiritual life". The books that the above proscription allowed included some spiritual classics such as the Autobiography of St. Theresa of Avila or The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. The bulk of the reading done in True House, however, concerned specifically Charismatic topics; praying in tongues, the baptism in the Spirit, etc. Some highly unorthodox writers were also included; Watchman Nee, Darek Prince, Bob Mumford.

For further documentation concerning these 'pastoral ministry' practices of True House Community, write Fr. Ken McGuire at

University Catholic Center
840 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90024

Father McGuire, an anthropologist who studied True House, has in his possession all the papers I kept during the time I was in True House, as well as the papers of many others.

I would like to be able to attribute good will to the persons responsible for the above abuses. If unbridled enthusiasm were the only crime of the renewal communities, I would perhaps not be writing, this letter.

*See the Hittinger statement for further details concerning exorcisms in True House.

But, from living in a Charismatic community for two years I know this is not the case. The leaders of these communities are as much politically-minded as they are religious. The leaders have a vision of what they think the Church should be like. They will stop at nothing in attempting to implement their vision. 'Pastoral ministry' is just a technique they use for insuring the unswaying loyalty of the members of Charismatic communities the themselves. By building up their power within their communities, the leaders, of course, build up their power outside the community.

The charismatics are not only politically-minded within their communities. They are quite good at politicizing on the wider Church level, especially with Church hierarchical figures. While working for the 1973 International Conference, I organized for its steering committee a 10-page report concerning a political strategy toward Cardinal Suenens. The report included such items as: a plan for wining and dining the Cardinal's secretary and confidant, Sr. Florence O'Brien*; and a plan to keep the Cardinal away from persons at the University of Notre Dame who would give a less favorable account of the activities of the Charismatic Renewal. The report also recounted how the printer's proofs for the conference had purposely not been corrected or brought up-to-date. This was done so that the Cardinal's name would not be recorded as the Sunday homilist in the main body of the program. Instead, a flier slipped into the program announced:

By his own request, His Excellency Cardinal Suenens will give the homily to Sunday's mass. ... Praise the Lord.

In much the same way, charismatics manipulate their language for political purposes. In public, charismatic leaders advertize their

* I think this is the correct name. I may be mistaken, however.

orthodoxy and obedience to ecclesiastical authority. In private, however, things are different. The words 'orthodox' or 'catholic' in closed circles in True House described persons in need of pastoral ministry, possibly even exorcism.

The above information is based exclusively on my experience with True House Community, no longer in existence. The types of abuses mentioned in this testimony are not, however, specific to True House alone. There is every indication that exactly the same sorts of things mentioned in this letter are going on in many other Charismatic communities. The purpose of this testimony is not in any way to attain revenge for past injuries done to myself by the Charismatic Renewal. Rather, this testimony is written with a mind to the thousands of people presently involved in or affected by the Charismatic Renewal movement. It is my hope that Holy Mother Church can correct and redirect a religious movement that has, I feel, gotten somewhat out of hand.

Sincerely in Christ,

Patrick T. Flynn

Patrick T. Flynn

Patrick T. Flynn

Senior, University of Notre Dame
majoring in philosophy.

4/1/75

I, Laura Tolosko, am a student at the University of Notre Dame majoring in theology and philosophy. Two and a half years ago I moved to South Bend, Indiana to be initiated into a Catholic charismatic community in the hopes of finding an environment supportive of my commitment to serve the Church and grow in my faith. In my eighteen-month affiliation with this community, I have come to see that there are two hazards that call for investigation by the Church. Within the last decade, a precedent has been set and maintained regarding the formation and structure of charismatic communities that has vitiated the most fundamental Christian precepts of the dignity of the human person. The first danger is the lack of qualified ministerial authority and the extent of this authority. The second point in question is the movement's propensity to allure people who, unable to cope with problems in themselves and in their interactions with society, choose to surrender their lives into the hands of untrained lay persons who are incapable of intelligent diagnosis and prescription. In fact, those so impaired may find their problems augmented or over-emphasized to insure dependence on the community. In the same way, allegiance has been procured from those who come into the body sufficiently upright and well-adjusted that community is not sought as a psychological refuge. By re-defining sanity and holiness, and interpreting Scripture to fit their political purposes, the leaders are able to evaluate a person's stance vis-à-vis God and others as being much more precarious and depraved than it is in reality, and then prescribe their community as the only viable means of spiritual and emotional rehabilitation.

True House Community was a body of seventy or eighty students and working people that felt an apostolate to renew the Church, especially directing its efforts toward the University of Notre Dame. The community was sub-divided into more manageable units called 'households'. Each household was governed by a pastoral team which assumed responsibility for every aspect of its members' lives. Three co-ordinators presided over the community, completing a line of authority and communication that powerfully regulated even the most innocent actions and sentiments from the most remote corners of the community.

I was relegated to a household of five women, of which I was the youngest, and three of them comprised the pastoral team. It was soon made clear to me that service to the Church was defined as service to the community, and specifically lived out in an unquestioned submission to this majority of the household. The tenor of the living situation was, for an eighteen-year-old, extremely structured and subdued; I was made to feel that my youthful exuberance was a wound in need of healing. That persons still in their teens should not be expected to be fully mature was a consideration that had been dismissed. Most non-religious music was prone to rile the Spirit, competitive sports were 'not in the Lord', any dinner conversation not instigated by the presiding elder was 'not edifying', and for a young man to ask a young lady to dinner was deemed 'inappropriate', and unthinkable if either was not a community member. The manifestations of youth—idealism, need for self-expression, contact with the outside world, and the like—had to succumb to the constant purging of 'confrontation' and repentance of pride and ambition. In addition, there were few opportunities to cultivate friendships either within or outside of the household. I was told that I was not yet ready to be drawn into the deep bonds of friendship that existed among the pastoral

team because I did not yet know 'how to love'. When they would meet behind closed doors each day,* I could feel only hurt, resentment, and loneliness, for I was permitted to relate to them only as confessors, and was dissuaded from seeing any of the friends I had made in the previous years. One friend in particular, a brilliant math and psychology student at the University of Notre Dame, was portrayed to me as Satanic because he would not endorse my charismatic activities.

During this time, many persuasive attempts were instigated to convince me that I was wounded deeply in my past and was, as a result, entangled in a dream world that I constructed to deal with reality on my own terms. The diagnosis they were to give to what I regard as a relatively successful and stable high-school career decreed it little more than schizoid attempts to draw attention to myself. I have since then been unable to take these accusations very seriously. My education had been richly occupied with student government, athletics, liturgical activities, and music; and I can say that I was considered academically gifted as well. I had little trouble making and keeping close friends of either sex, and in the tumultuous period of the sixties', my growing pains within my family were typical of the age and of the eldest child in the family. But their interpretation sought to do violence to these memories in order to substitute a new world-view based on sterile notions of community. Being young and impressionable, I did not protest when I was told that I was living in darkness; rather, I believed these people, all of whom were yet in their twenties, and consented to put my life in their hands. I was by that time broken by daily confrontations and increased feelings of inferiority and alienation. I was told that a broken spirit was best in accepting the Lord's grace of healing, but instead of feeling enlightened, I was terribly unhappy. I was confused as to what

* As Vergil so aptly put it: "Alitur vitium vivitque tegendo."

the community was doing to me or to itself.

One evening I was approached by the head of the household, who told me, as she had on several other occasions, that I had serious problems with resentment and ambition. She immediately followed the diatribe by adding that this was a time of special grace for me, and informed me of what she called a wonderful vehicle of healing that the Lord had revealed to the co-ordinators. It seemed the only way out. 'Break-through ministry' was a series of intense sessions with the co-ordinators, pastoral team, and other leaders of the community. Its purpose, I was told, is to purge one of 'patterns of sin' by 'bringing them into the light' so that they can be exposed to the truth.* The first night I was required to give an account of every difficulty in myself and in my family, extending back even into childhood. The situations in my background that were the most painful to reveal seemed to be those that the co-ordinators were most anxious to hear. By the end of the night, I felt that I had been on trial and that my family had made a monster out of me. There was nothing left to my self-esteem; I had given away every family secret, I had watched as my accomplishments of the past and plans for the future were obliterated, and I felt as weak and incapable as an infant. The co-ordinators and pastoral team told me that this was a good sign, because now I was at last in the position for God to make a new woman out of me. The second and third nights were similarly painful, and I saw that in a very real way, my soul and psyche belonged to them. I have now in my possession papers that were drawn up and distributed to those present at my 'break-through' that I would call an indictment against my character and the condition of my soul. They are documented by periods of intense scrutiny of my behavior, in which without my knowledge or consent, anything that they could hold suspect regarding my allegiance to the community and my emotional stability was recorded.. There is nothing

*It may be well to remember that Satan goes under the pseudonym of 'the accuser', and often goes parading about as an angel of light in a very convincing way. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit, rather than pointing a finger, acts as our Advocate, pleading on our behalf.

positive about me in the seven page report.

The following are typical excerpts from this document. I understand that there are similar reports on others who were required to undergo break-through ministry as well.

-I think she can't really believe that she can put herself into anyone's hands because they'll hurt her.

-I really feel also that her world is like a deep, dark pit in which she is trapped and doesn't really know how to overcome them. I think this might be a point where evil spirits could have entered into Laura's mind which try to cripple her, while all the while making her not see that anything is really wrong with her.

-Keeps all her mail. Has lots of personal correspondence out of the community. Another escape for her.

-RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Give her more things to do in the community (for her, ten hours a week). She has too much free time to lay and daydream and fantasize.
2. Get rid of that notebook of hers, and have her cut-down on her correspondence.

The interrogation and manipulation of the deepest parts of an individual's moral life was taken for granted as well-intentioned and a right belonging to the co-ordinators and pastoral teams; and was therefore readily accepted by most of the community members. But if a person would dare question their authority, as did one who contested the community's indifference to the poor and other areas of social concern, he was verbally and publicly assaulted by the co-ordinators. (They had said that his recommendation was 'out of order' and a sign of distrust.) A more drastic 'strategy' (the leader's own term for their tactics) was executed against any honestly sceptical person who was thought to question the anti-intellectual and anti-cultural sentiment of the community. For example, scholastic philosophy, we learned, didn't conform to the simple heart we were to attain to. My cello was seen as a diversion and an object of pride, and the private journal I kept, which was read without my consent, was seen as a detraction from the live-in confessional

that was the household.

Those who were vocal in their critical perceptions, those who suspected the co-ordinators of playing political havoc with people's lives and engaging in 'paraclericism' were accused of spiritual anarchy and succumbing to Satan. But for those that inevitably saw their salvation in the community, and saw the co-ordinators as their saviors, the effects were more disastrous. The co-ordinators felt confident that they could tear a person apart and put him back together again. Only God can do this effectively, and being motivated by love, He does not work with the tactics that charismatic community has been seen to employ. The consequences of these tactics were seen when the community fell apart. Each member had a serious faith crisis, and some had their very identities so obliterated that they are still struggling to recover.

There has, unfortunately, been little to prohibit anyone desirous of power from seizing a charismatic community as an opportunity to gratify this desire of becoming a 'Good Shepherd'. There are obvious ramifications when a Napoleonic personality is allowed to take custody of the souls of many aspiring to obedience and faith in God's will as perceived by the leader. A more subtle danger exists as the political ends of an entire community begin to outweigh its spiritual purposes, as happened in True House. What seemed an apostolic recruitment for Christian believers was instead a coercive political ploy in a power struggle between communities. In other cases where such communities undertake evangelistic activities, a resulting 'conversion' does not imply the freedom to pursue a Christian lifestyle outside the movement, but is equated with salvation through charismatic community. In a bona fide Catholic community these situations would be less likely to occur, but in a self-ordained religious sect, especially one that is not properly answerable to the Church, they would be more apt to go unrecognized and unchallenged.

It would be wise that the Church be alerted to these perils, and investigate the Catholic Charismatic Renewal further before giving Her blessing to what may be an intrinsically heretical organizational network.

Respectfully submitted in Christ,

Laura Jean Tolosko

Laura Jean Tolosko
March 25, 1975

P.O. Box 95
Notre Dame, Indiana

I, John Graczak, entered the University of Notre Dame in the Fall of 1972 and one week after my arrival encountered the True House Charismatic Community. I came to Notre Dame already initiated into the Charismatic Renewal under Catholic auspices, and it was thus natural for me to start my school year by going on a retreat sponsored by the True House Community. On this retreat I was subjected to extensive teachings on the necessity of living in that particular type of Catholic Charismatic community in order to survive the Notre Dame environment with my faith intact. Initially showing some scepticism to this claim, one of the members of the community contacted me after the retreat in order to solidify my association with True House. During an extended and painful talk, he advanced the claim that I was not yet a Christian. This was a surprising claim, seeing as I had lived an intense spiritual regime in High School, consisting of works of mercy, frequent reception of the Sacraments, spiritual direction, daily meditation and use of the Divine Office. I was soon to find out that these practices, even when set within the life of a man of great charity, are not sufficient for a Charismatic concept of the Christian life.

I eventually entered True House, and am now aware, from my own experience in proselytizing others, that this move was due to my being carefully manipulated. I subjected myself totally to the teaching of the community leaders, as was demanded, thinking all the while that I was part of a group wholly in the tradition of the Catholic Church. I think now that I was wholly mistaken. I would like to dwell on the reasons that I lived for the period of a little over a year in a spiritual association that was both in heresy and schism.

Firstly, the emphasis on charismatic prayer, not peculiar to my own community, but also found in many other "charismatic covenant communities", is out of proportion with the emphasis placed on the Liturgy. It was our practice to require attendance at a weekly Mass and prayer meeting: attendance at our own daily Mass was encouraged. Yet during this required weekly meeting it was common practice to skip the Mass in favor of the prayer meeting, which event no one was allowed to miss. Furthermore, at the daily Mass, it was the custom to hold a "word of prayer", that is, the exercise

of the gifts of tongues, prophecy, exhortation and interpretation of tongues, both after the homily and after Communion. This was the center of our Liturgy. Christ was expected to reveal Himself at these periods. This seems much different from the normal practice of the Catholic Church.

Secondly, in the course of my community life, as a result of moral problems as young men experience, I asked for "special ministry". I was led late one night to the office of the head of the community. After midnight I was ordered to make a general confession and even a revelation of all my painful memories before this man, his secretary, and my immediate superior. The second night I was exorcized, the head of the community using and elaborating upon the "Exorcism of Satan and the Fallen Angels" of the old Ritual. Mr. Hittinger's document provides a more thorough explanation of this ministry.

Thirdly, after this special ministry I was told by the head of the community to leave my confessor, and was advised as to which confessor to see.

Fourthly, the Marian devotions, and the love of the bishop which was apparent within our community was seen as a mark of distinction separating us from other similar communities such as The Word of God, Ann Arbor, Michigan, and The People of Praise, South Bend, Indiana. These communities are lead by Mr. Steve Clark and Dr. Paul DeCelles, respectively. In these prominent Catholic Charismatic communities there is found little true devotion to the Mother of God, and problems in relations with the local ordinary.

Fifthly, our community explicitly considered itself to be a true model of the Church. This attitude is quite common to other covenant communities within the Renewal. It is now the avowed policy of a prominent part of the Renewal that it represents the "New Church". (cf. New Covenant)

Sixthly, constant embarrassment was caused in our open prayer meetings and the prayer meetings that I frequented in other locals, by the recitation of the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be by one of the participants during the time of spontaneous prayer. The use of such form prayers were considered to be somewhat less sophisticated, indeed inappropriate next to tongues etc..

Seventhly, the members of our community who reminded us of our obligation to social justice and works of mercy were constantly harangued by our leaders. While some experiments in the area of social justice have been carried on by other charismatic groups, I have often encountered, and myself once held, that Charismatics were called to simply pray for the ending of poverty and hunger. This seems contrary to our Tradition and the recent Counciliar decrees.

Finally, upon leaving this community because of the degeneration in the psychological and spiritual health of its members, I was plunged into a confusion healed only by resorting to the normal means of grace applied by the Benedictines of the Priory of St. Louis and St. Mary and the care of a non-charismatic director. I have left the Charismatic Renewal, and am now engaged in trying to live the life of a Christian student, orienting my life towards the service of the Church. I have returned to a solid, developing appreciation of the Incarnation and Pasch of our Lord, and its mediation by the Church. I fear the aim of the Charismatics to remake the Church in their own image: a Church of covenant communities presided over by charismatic leaders, a Church whose members would be subject to uncalled-for scrutiny of minor beliefs and attitudes, a Church which no longer humbly relies on the normal means of grace. This is the type of Church for which I hoped and worked. It is not the Catholic Church to which I have returned and given my life.

John J. Graczak

John J. Graczak
March 20, 1975
Notre Dame, Ind.

Academics and the Charismatic Experience

While a freshman at the University of Notre Dame (1970-1971) I began to participate in the charismatic prayer meetings on campus. The charismatic fellowship stressed commitment and increased involvement; commitment in the group took on a total and exclusive character. The charismatic experience was shaped by the leaders to impinge on, influence and control every vital aspect of the participant's life. Frankly, I am afraid that this led to a spiritual totalitarianism: charismatic renewal became a "master-plan," an over-arching scheme, which had extreme difficulty in tolerating or appreciating other perspectives or commitments. I would like to note in particular how this affected the aspect of study, by relating the general atmosphere and "mind-set" of the group and also the specific counseling that I received in this regard.

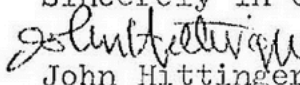
Gripped by the exigencies of Christian virtue, of the power of the Holy Spirit, the leaders constantly juxtaposed knowledge and moral character as discrepant. With an honest desire to order values, to put "first things first," they held service to the community and formation of character as a priority to academics and study; unfortunately an ordering of values became an elimination of certain values. Academics were seen as an obstacle to the "duties of service and love." Moreover, the atmosphere of the group made critique and reflection to appear as a "half-heartedness," and as an insult to faith. This general attitude toward study effected in a number of student members a mental paralysis so that matters of faith and morals were an impediment to any autonomous intellectual inquiry. The atmosphere made it quite hard to take seriously the value of study; at worst it engendered contempt and distrust, at best an indifference.

From the outset of my involvement, I can recall numerous public and private remarks by leaders and members of the group that referred with scorn to the Notre Dame academy as a whole, to the liberal arts in particular, and even certain professors. Theology and theologians were a special target

of contempt, for their "comprömise of faith." Thus, during the freshman year I was persuaded not to major in theology, which I had wanted to do. I opted for a major in philosophy while home during a family tragedy (Spring 1972). However, during the next semester (Fall 1972), I was advised during extended counseling sessions to turn my energy away from speculative endeavors because of "gross intellectual pride." and arrogance." Practical studies, especially business, were recommended in their stead. During these counseling sessions I was advised that the intellectual life had been a source of great bondage for me, in fact of "demonic bondage." After repenting of this great pride and arrogance, I had demons cast out of me. This anti-academic posture was reinforced by an appeal for love and service to be manifested in time commitments. After this period of intense counseling I was given at least six different jobs and responsibilities in the community life, which when added to two mandatory prayer meetings and household meetings, 10 hours at best were left for study and academic work. I was also counseled to view the demands of my professors as "arbitrary" and to strive not for excellant grades, but for average ones. At one point a rule was imposed on our household not to discuss intellectual or academic topics.

About half a year after this (June 1973), due to further developements in the group,^{and} counseling from an outside priest, I decided to withdraw completely from the charismatic renewal. Because the renewal appeals to many young students I think ~~that~~ these tendencies to totalitarian control and distrust of the natural order should be noted. I am willing to discuss these matters further if necessary.

Sincerely in Christ,



John Hittinger
Graduate School of Philosophy
The Catholic University of America
Washington, D.C. 20017

The purpose of this statement is to bring to your attention certain experiences I have had both as a participant in and observer of the charismatic renewal in this country. At the outset I would like to offer biographical data which will place this statement into context.

My background as an American Catholic was not uncommon prior to becoming involved in the renewal. I was born and baptized in the Church in 1949. By all objective standards, my parents were good Catholics, and made every effort to raise me in the light of the Faith. I was educated in Parochial schools (a financial sacrifice that my parents took very seriously), and selected Notre Dame for college work in the hope that I might become acquainted with Catholic scholarship. Upon my arrival at the university I was introduced to the True-House pentecostal community. My subsequent commitment to this group was the result of two developments in my life: 1) quite apart from the charismatics, I had been experiencing God acting in my life. The pentecostals were able to provide categories for understanding this experience. Among other things, they stressed a commitment to a common task within a community; 2) the prospect for renewal in church life seemed exciting. Thus, the pentecostals had a clear notion of evangelization that appealed to me. On either count, I wished to make a serious commitment to living and preaching the Gospel.

From August of 1972 to April of 1973 I was a member of the True-House community. As it happened, I not only held a position of responsibility within the group, but also had occasion to travel around the country giving retreats and what the charismatics call 'days of renewal'. Briefly, I shall outline the governmental structure of the community, locate for you my role in the government, and then bring to your attention what prompted me to leave the movement.

At the top, True-House was governed by three 'coordinators'. These men were, in effect, self-appointed. Occasionally they asked for a vote of confidence on the part of the group, but there was no constitutional provision requiring them to do so. The only explicit oath made by each community member was to obey the authority of the coordinators. While this community eventually involved 70 committed members and thousands of dollars worth

of property, no political order was ever made clear -- other than the total authority of the coordinators. Under these men was a 'pastoral council' which was comprised of the heads of the various households. The council was selected by the coordinators, and had no power to make any demands upon the coordinators. Rather, it merely gathered once a week to hear the coordinators' directives. My position as 'executive secretary' of the council was to frame the council's agenda and to supervise the manner in which the coordinators' orders were carried out. Thus, as a representative of the coordinators, I was an all-purpose 'spy' and legate.

In October of 1972, one of the coordinators decided to institute what was called a 'break-through ministry', the expressed purpose of which was to deal with community members who were not adapting properly to their authority. Basically, the format of this mechanism was as follows: 1) the household head would submit the name of a community member under their charge who was having 'problems'; 2) my task was to consult with the household superior in order to gather useful data on the individual's history, his family's history, and certain weaknesses in the person's psychological make-up; 3) without forewarning, and in the middle of the night, the individual was roused out of bed and taken to the coordinator's house. In a darkened room, the individual would be subjected to an intense questioning until he admitted failure. After this admission, he would be required to make a general confession of his sins (from childhood onward) to the coordinator. He was then prayed over for what was termed a 'healing of memories'; 4) the coordinator would then employ the Roman rite of exorcism, calling 'demons' out of the person. In some instances, the individual's personal belongings were burned in the fireplace during the course of the exorcism (e.g. clothing and books); 5) finally, the individual was forced to make certain promises. These promises covered a wide spectrum of the person's life. The most standard practice was to elicit an oath not to confess the ministry to a priest. If a student was spending too much time with his academic work, he would promise not to study so much -- or even to lower his grade-average as an exercise in humility. If the person's parents were suspicious of his involvement in the community, he would be required to curtail his communication with home.

From October of 1972 to February of 1973 I witnessed eight of these attempts, and know of several more at which I was not present. The ministry became a convenient tool for dealing with the smallest irregularities in the community's life, and as the leaders gave into the temptation nearly a third of the community was subjected to 'break-through'. I questioned the propriety of these measures on a number of occasions, and was promptly characterized as a tool of Satan. Because there was no way to correct the situation within the structure of the community, I was forced to leave in April of 1973. Fortunately, there was a Paulist priest doing anthropological research on the community. Together, we brought these activities to the attention of other leaders in the charismatic renewal. Here, a brief outline of how this situation was dealt with should reveal more general problems in the renewal as such.

The leader who was responsible for conducting these break-through ministries had made overt sexual gestures toward several male members of the community. Because he was also a national leader in the movement, the general leadership of the renewal was forced to act. I urged that the problem was one of how authority in the community allowed the situation to go unchecked for so long. However, my suggestions were disregarded, and the leader was forced to leave the community for reasons of scandal and homosexuality. There can be little doubt that other communities have a similar political structure with an identical understanding of authority. Moreover, the rite of exorcism and the rubric of 'healing of memories' are used frequently in their own communities. The practice of eliciting commitments from individuals who undergo these functions is standard. The primary difference between the tact employed by True-House and other groups is one of style rather than substance. Thus, the situation in True-House was arrested because it was out of control and likely to cause scandal. Nevertheless, in other charismatic communities there is a similar dearth of mechanisms to question the authority and practice of the leaders. I would suggest that even a perfunctory survey of groups in this country will reveal: the use of exorcism, healing of memories, and absolute authority on the part of the men who use these methods. Therefore, it would be a mistake, I feel, to devalue the

True-House affair as an isolated instance of a particular leader's sickness. While charismatic communities have often been an example to the wider church of how a group might dedicate itself to the Gospel, the extraordinary forms of coercion are not so evident. One must monitor and investigate the daily life of these groups. If they have chosen to frame their communities in such a way that internal correction cannot be negotiated, outside wisdom must be brought to bear on their lives. True-House no longer exists. Dozens of lives have been disoriented - some still believe themselves to have been possessed by demons. Thousands of dollars in common property has been tossed to the wind. From my perspective, this is all a consequence of lacking a legitimate means to question authority within the community. Indeed, these groups need the wisdom and direction of the Mother Church! The phenomena of prayer groups, where Catholics gather together and pray, is something altogether different from highly structured communities where serious spiritual, occupational, and financial commitments are made. I have confidence that the Church has a tradition of wisdom on how to direct such serious commitments.

If you desire to collect further information, I will be pleased to oblige. Furthermore, the Paulist who cared for the people who underwent the break-through ministry may be contacted:

Rev. Kenneth McGuire C.S.P.
c/o Newman Center U.C.L.A.
840 Hilgard Ave.
Los Angeles, California
90024

Sincerely in Christ,

Francis R. Hittinger
Francis Russell Hittinger

c/o Moreau Seminary
Notre Dame, Indiana
46556

March, 1975

To Whom It May Concern.

I, the undersigned, should like to testify that the leaders of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal have been engaging in practices which, in my opinion, are detrimental to the unity of the Catholic Church. The leaders are mainly those who are now listed on the Service Committee (New Covenant, 3, (no. 7, 1974) p. 17), namely, Kevin Ranaghan, Bert Ghezzi, Paul DeCelles, Ralph Martin and Stephen Clark (the other members appear to be working for unity within the Church).

In the summer of 1971 I was formally excluded from the Catholic Pentecostal meetings at South Bend, Indiana, U. S. A. Three leaders, James Byrne, Andrew Plodowski and Edward D. O'Connor, took me to an isolated classroom, accused me falsely, allowed me no explanation and then Plodowski raised his hand and said, "We witness against you according to Matthew 18". Edward D. O'Connor agreed with his interpretation of Matthew 18, namely, that he, as a layman, had the right to use an excommunication text against a Catholic in good standing in the Church and with her local bishop. Later the three agreed that their accusation was false.

The meetings were held at that time at St. Joseph's High School but later the group decided to return to the campus of the University of Notre Dame, Indiana. The Reverend President Theodore Hesburgh ruled that no one was to be

excluded from the prayer meeting and the group was obliged to allow me to attend. However, they used an innocent young girl to play a trick on me and to get me out of the room. At that point Kevin Ranaghan rose, lied in public concerning myself and a priest (the cases were not connected and the priest had already left the meeting). Ranaghan invited people to take away with them an eight-page statement concerning me: on the first page there were six false accusations. Fr. Edward D. O'Connor said that nearly 130 people came to him to complain of Ranaghan's behaviour.

On July 8th, I requested a meeting with the 12 co-ordinators of the charismatic prayer group in order to learn why I was excluded: the ordinary people attending the meeting were in full agreement to my presence and expressed pleasure at my contributions especially in explaining Scripture to the group from time to time and introducing Catholic concepts. I was granted audience with the 12 co-ordinators (some of whom brought their wives) on July 8th at 8.0 p.m. I was not allowed to take any Pentecostal friends with me but two Holy Cross priests and a Professor of Law were allowed to accompany me. I was subjected to four hours of accusations which I can only describe as a kangaroo trial with mock accusations e. g. Kevin Ranaghan accused me of speaking in public

Seattle, Washington: at that time I had never visited that city! Paul DeCelles accused me of prophesying in the name of Mary, although I only sang a hymn in her honour, and also of saying prayers which showed social concern. James Byrne accused me of saying that Fr. Edward D. O'Connor had made sexual advances towards me. I was relieved to find that all these accusations were ill-founded and that the leaders' insecurity arose from the fact that I am a fully qualified theologian while none of them (except Fr. O'Connor) had such qualifications. They were obviously very afraid of losing their leadership positions if the main body of the prayer group asked that I might become a leader.

During the same summer the New Covenant printed libelous statements against me and used all but two of the excommunications texts employed by the early Anabaptists. Hence they ruined my character in the prayer groups over the country who had never had a chance to meet me. The Pentecostal books which I had written were not allowed to be sold or advertised. Later they offered about 10 copies at each international conference and then said that they had sold out.

Later I tried to attend the meetings at the Church of Christ the King. The parish priest wanted me to join the group and let me through the inner door to the meeting place.

I rose to read a text from the New Testament and Kevin Ranaghan shouted at me to leave the room. I stood my ground and said I was present with the full approval of the parish priest. However, from that occasion onwards two guards have been placed at the doors of the meeting place to question strangers and to keep both myself and certain other Catholics away. The leaders claim to have "authority to exclude those who do not accept their theology". They say this authority is independent of the parish priests. Their "theology" includes fundamentalist interpretation of Scripture; the necessity of glossolalia, the practice of exorcisms, the complete subordination of women and the teaching that "normal Church life is not enough". The leaders seem to be religiously indifferent. Catholicity is discouraged. One of their books (S. Clark, Baptised in the Spirit) avers that Luke teaches that the Holy Spirit is not given in Baptism but through the imposition of hands. At the time when I was able to gain entrance to the meetings Mrs. Jeanne DeCelles and two of her friends would take chairs, situate themselves behind me, and exorcise me during the prayer meeting.

To conclude, I feel that a thorough investigation should be made of the Pentecostal Movement especially at Ann Arbor, Michigan, and South Bend, Indiana. Priests in the respective parishes and those who have had pastoral care of

the groups should be asked for their opinion. I request that the Service Committee formally rescind their libel and slander concerning me and I ask for the cessation of unauthorized exorcisms and attempts to make people manifest their consciences to lay people. I should also like to point out that in 1971 there was public detraction of a young lady before 600 people from all over America. She was excluded from the Ann Arbor group and those who gave her hospitality were banned. The priests in the parish attempted to counsel the Pentecostals but they remained stubborn. I request also that the kiss of peace not be refused to Catholics at public Masses.

I should like to say that my testimony is an attempt to try to be reconciled with this group. Over the last three years I have had the help of a canon lawyer who could find no just cause for my being described as "divisive and disruptive" and did manage to persuade the Pentecostal leaders to remove their libel and slander of me from reprinted issues of the New Covenant. However, the original copy is still circulating and is quoted by Fr. Joseph Fichter, S. J. in his recent book, The Cult of the Paraclete, Sheed and Ward, 1975.

I believe that these leaders are sincere and are

behaving in these strange ways through over zeal and a desire to have a new ecclesiola of which they will be the hierarchy. I am sure that my own case is not an isolated one. There have been reports of psychological breakdowns of people who have left the movement: this is not surprising when such "kangaroo trials" as the one experienced by myself are practiced.

I do not think that the movement should be suppressed but I suggest that the leadership be radically changed and include more bishops, priests, women, psychologists, sociologists and theologians. It would also be advisable to have a rotating leadership. Further, great care should be taken that godliness does not become the source of gain.

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