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Christians in Yugoslavia targeted for ties with West

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (ABP) -- A Christian church in Yugoslavia was reportedly attacked by neighbors who associated it with United States President Bill Clinton, who is a Baptist.

Local people threw stones at the Christian Evangelism Center in Backi Petrovac, reported Dane Vidovic, a Baptist who lives in Belgrade. While anti-American sentiment has fueled hostility against the church and its kindergarten, so far there have been no physical attacks, Vidovic told European Baptist Press Service.

Some Yugoslav evangelicals have been predicting they would suffer from being identified by countrymen as having ties with the West.

"A general feeling among the evangelical community is that evangelical Christians and organizations in the West are not vocal enough against NATO aggression," said Vidovic, an elder at First Baptist Church in Belgrade.

"Except the personal encouragement and promises for prayers, there (is) no real public condemnation against the aggression," he said. "On the contrary, some individual evangelical leaders have supported and justified the aggression."

Meanwhile, Texas Baptist Men announced it is sending a dozen relief volunteers to Albania to purify water, distribute food and provide medical supplies for refugees fleeing the conflict in Kosovo.

Working in cooperation with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, the Texas volunteers will leave Dallas April 14 and spend two weeks in Albania, said Jim Furgerson, executive director of Texas Baptist Men

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-- By ABP staff

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Baptist World Alliance leaders report 'dire poverty' in Chiapas

McLEAN, Va. (ABP) -- Dire poverty and Catholic-evangelical tensions are challenges facing the Mexican state of Chiapas, according to a pair of Baptist leaders who recently visited the area.

Baptist World Alliance leaders Denton Lotz and Tony Cupit visited and worshipped in Baptist churches in mountain country near Mexico's border with Guatemala March 18-22, according to a news release from the McLean, Va.,-based BWA.

Dire poverty among indigenous Indians in the agricultural state contributed to the rise of the Zapatista revolutionary group, which launched an armed struggle with the Mexican government in 1994.

Lotz and Cupit said most Baptists and other evangelicals do not support violence but, like the Zapatistas, desire food, decent housing, medical care and education for their children.

Baptists and other evangelicals, which comprise about 40 percent of an estimated 9 million indigenous population, also have experienced opposition from zealous Roman Catholics in the region.

Baptists can play a role of "union of and reconciliation" in Chiapas, said Lotz, BWA general secretary.

Cupit, the BWA's director of study and research, said the visit "not only helps us alert about Baptist constituency" about the plight of the region but also to "reaffirm" the organization's commitment to "human rights and justice issues."

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Supreme Court refuses to review cult-deprogramming ruling

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- A cult-information network can be held partially liable for an illegal forced "deprogramming" of an 18-year-old resident of Washington state, according to a ruling left standing by the U.S. Supreme Court March 22.

The high court refused to hear Cult Awareness Network's claim that it should not be held responsible for violating the civil rights of Jason Scott, who was abducted and turned over to a deprogrammer recommended to his mother by a CAN volunteer.

After failing to persuade three of her sons to voluntarily leave the Life Tabernacle Church, a branch of the United Pentecostal Church, Kathy Tonkin called a Seattle community hotline in 1991 asking for help in "deprogramming" the youths.

Manning the hotline was Shirley Landa, a volunteer who was Washington state's contact for the Illinois-based CAN, a non-profit advocacy organization that seeks to educate the public about cults.

Landa, who was not named in the suit, allegedly referred Tonkin to Rick Ross, a counselor known to perform involuntary deprogrammings.

According to court documents, Ross and other defendants abducted Scott and held him five days while Ross debated church teachings with him.

Two of Tonkin's sons were minors and legally under her control. Scott, however, had turned 18. He escaped and sued Ross, CAN and other defendants claiming he was deprived of his civil rights and also for negligence and outrage. A jury awarded Scott nearly \$5 million in compensatory and punitive damages. The ruling found CAN 10 percent liable for compensatory damages and ordered the organization to pay \$1 million in punitive damages.

CAN appealed the ruling, claiming Landa was not acting as its agent when she referred Scott's mother to a deprogrammer. Landa was involved in other anti-cult organizations besides CAN, attorneys argued, which has a policy of not referring people to deprogrammers.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, disagreed, however, finding "vicarious liability" against CAN for acts of a volunteer agent.

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-- By ABP staff

Blackaby denies popular book teaches 'charismatic' views

By Stacey Hamby

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (ABP) -- Southern Baptist author Henry Blackaby denies teachings in his book and Bible study "Experiencing God" are "charismatic," despite their popularity among Christians who claim that label.

The Southern Baptist-produced book and discipleship course have been used far and wide in Baptist churches and other evangelical and mainline denominations, including groups that consider themselves charismatic.

In fact, Todd Hunter, director of the Association of Vineyard Churches USA, said, "'Experiencing God' is advocating hearing from God in ways normally thought of as charismatic."

Not so, replied Blackaby, director of prayer, revival and spiritual awakening for the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board. "It was written in the direction of knowing and doing the will of God," Blackaby said. "I'm simply doing what Baptists have always done -- talking about the Scriptures, letting the Holy Spirit guide us in obedience to him and knowing the abundance of life in him."

Hunter's comment is not the first time Blackaby's material has been called "charismatic." An article in the March issue of Charisma magazine implies that "Experiencing God" is a catalyst for a rise in charismatic Southern Baptist churches.

"That was a gross misrepresentation of 'Experiencing God,'" Blackaby said, adding that no one contacted him before publishing the story.

"I do not, have not and will not urge people to turn away from tradition," Blackaby said. "To me, tradition is what God has done in our midst. 'Experiencing God' does not urge people to abandon tradition but simply to return to the Scriptures and let the Spirit of the living God guide them, corporately and personally."

Blackaby said he now has "a personal walk with God," as he has all his life, "but that doesn't mean I'm charismatic in the modern term."

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Charismatic Baptists contend they're being true to Scripture

By Rob Marus

MARSHFIELD, Mo. (ABP) -- Something unusual is happening at Calvary Baptist Church in Marshfield, Mo., and pastor Roger Hicks thinks it's because the Holy Spirit has come to town.

Since January 1998, Hicks said, the evidence of the Spirit's presence has been more palpable in Calvary Church than ever before. But some of the non-traditional worship practices attendant with that revival have cost Hicks dearly. In 1998, his church lost half its members; almost all of his Baptist pastor friends have become aloof; and, last fall, his congregation was expelled from Webster County Baptist Association.

But Hicks believes other Southern Baptist churches soon will be faced with the same issue. "I believe every Southern Baptist church in America 20 years from now will have to go through the door I've gone through," Hicks said.

Hicks used to be a fairly typical Southern Baptist minister. He became pastor of Calvary in 1986 and led the church through a period of significant growth in attendance and baptisms.

Hicks said his stock was rising among the ranks of fundamental-conservative leaders in the Missouri Baptist Convention, and he was in line for the marks of success in Southern Baptist life -- offices, committee appointments and speaking engagements. But while attending a Baptist evangelism conference in 1996, he and his wife, Sarah, suddenly began to feel they had "drifted away from the shore."

The following February, Hicks accepted a friend's invitation to attend a revival at a local Assembly of God church. That night, he said, changed his life.

"I began hearing things that I had never heard before," Hicks said. In particular, the description in Acts 10:38 of Jesus living his life empowered by the "anointing of the Holy Spirit" struck him as revolutionary.

That insight prompted Hicks to respond to an invitation at the end of the service. "I went down to pray. I knew there was more to God than what I had; there was more to the Christian experience than what I had."

Hicks fell prostrate before God and the entire congregation. He says he was unable to move.

It was as if, quoting the 19th century revivalist Charles Finney, "waves of liquid love" poured through him, Hicks said. "There was a sense that something had happened to me. I was changed."

This was Hicks' first experience of being "slain in the Spirit." Then, he said, he experienced the gift of glossolalia, or "speaking in tongues."

"I found that, lying there on the floor, immobilized in this sea of joy, words started forming in my mouth while I was praising God," he recalled. "And that's while I was still the moderator of Webster County Baptist Association!" he concluded, laughing at the thought.

Hicks then embarked on a study what Scripture says about supernatural gifts of the Spirit. He said he found no biblical basis for what he had been taught to believe about those gifts -- namely, that they existed in biblical times to validate Christ's and the apostles' spiritual authority, but that that era ceased with the end of the Apostolic Age.

Hicks now terms that argument "absurd."

"So, if they (gifts) cease with the apostles, is the church there at Corinth wondering, 'OK, I wonder if John's dead yet?' As soon as John's body is cold in the grave, all of the sudden these gifts are going to cease? That's ridiculous."

Hicks said his professors in college and seminary approached the study of Pentecostal and charismatic worship practices from an adversarial perspective. "We always studied them to find out what was wrong. We always looked at the abuse and misuse of gifts -- never the correct use."

Since his change of heart, Hicks has become a close friend of Bill Sharples, former pastor of Pythian Avenue Baptist Church in Springfield, Mo.

In February 1997, Sharples says he had an experience of glossolalia while visiting an Assembly of God revival.

Later, he resigned his Baptist pulpit in an attempt to avoid a church split over his newfound worship practices.

To Sharples, the experience that night was worth the resultant hardship. "As I was standing there, this cloud of God's presence just settled on me. And I just knew I was in the presence of God," he said. "There was no question. It was not an emotional experience. In fact, I didn't feel that emotional. This deep, abiding peace just settled over me, and all the anger and doubt that I had accumulated in the ministry was just lifted from me."

Like Hicks, Sharples lamented the emphasis that many Baptists place on the misuse of the charismatic gifts of the Spirit. "The one thing I stress to people is that I'm not talking about that TV-evangelist-let's-make-miracles thing. It's God touching these people," he said. "We're not putting on a show; we're just letting God show up.

"I think Baptists have watched these excesses -- these things that are so distasteful -- and we've thrown the whole thing out," Sharples said.

Both pastors admitted that one fair criticism of charismatic practices is that they can leave a worship service open to confusion or manipulation.

In an effort to avoid such pitfalls, Hicks said he relies on a group of laymen in the church who pray for him and hold him accountable in his leadership role.

Hicks said mainstream Southern Baptists may be missing a wave of revival. "We have exchanged inspiration for information," he said.

Hicks said re-evaluating and accepting charismatic worship is a way for Southern Baptists to practice what they preach. "We have held to this inerrancy and this infallible Word of God," he said. "Well, we're going to get a chance to demonstrate what we believe. If we believe it's inerrant and infallible, we better do what it says."

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It's Saturday night at Smithton 'Outpouring'

By Tim Palmer

SMITHTON, Mo. (ABP) -- It's Saturday night at Smithton Community Church, and the outpouring service is starting to sizzle. The floor shudders from the impact of worshipers leaping in unison as they sing along with a loudly electrified praise band.

At a signal to pray, hundreds of hands shoot up like football referees signaling a touchdown. During corporate prayer the congregation pulses with an unintelligible drone of voices.

Through body-wracking spasms, breaking voices and tears, worshipers testify from the stage and the floor. They tell of deliverance from alcohol, from bitterness, from suicide, from skepticism.

Pastor Steve Gray shouts a scorching sermon on the need to bind the “strong man,” Satan. Too many churches are preaching a selfish, self-centered, self-esteem gospel, Gray says. “Satan loves a selfish place, because he’s selfish!”

Suicides, drugs and divorces didn’t used to happen among church people, Gray remarks. “What’s out there has gotten in here.”

Gray wonders: could the Smithton Outpouring be happening because the church of this day can’t last much longer? He points out that in Bible times, the Jews were the people of God. Today, Christians are the people of God. Then and now, something happened; something went wrong.

“Jesus is back on the scene again, and he’s going after Satan like he did before! God wants to bring the Kingdom into our midst. He’s gonna free some people!”

Dozens of visitors stream forward near the end of the four-hour service. One member gets in a visitor’s face to pray with fist-shaking fury; another stands behind to catch him when he collapses backward. Someone else drapes a burgundy blanket over the prostrate form.

One of those “slain” in the Holy Spirit rises after a short time and returns to her place near the wall. Asked to describe her experience, she simply smiles and replies, “I was with God.”

Three years ago, a revival broke out in Smithton. This Central Missouri community -- population 532 -- has seen tens of thousands of visitors from across the United States and from other nations. The “Smithton Outpouring” has been described in magazines and on television nationwide.

People have used words like “Pentecostal,” “charismatic” and “full gospel” to describe the worship service, Gray said. “If anything sets Smithton Community Church apart, it’s that we’re believing that the Kingdom of God is happening now,” Gray said.

Kathy Gray admits that the worship style at the non-denominational church founded by the couple in 1984 can be shocking to those who aren’t familiar with it.

But she and her husband contend that practices such as speaking in tongues and being “slain in the Spirit” are innocent and harmless.

This is especially true, they say, when you compare them to other activities seen in many churches -- gossip, manipulation, power struggles, love of money. No one’s afraid of those, the Grays contend.

Steve Gray illustrated the fallacious logic of some critics. “They’ll run out of church yelling, ‘Oh, I think the devil’s in the church!’ and then run home and watch TV.”

Before people react negatively to charismatic practices, he suggested, they should ask themselves why they’re not reacting similarly to backbiting, pride and other things the Bible clearly says to avoid. “Before you panic, think,” the counseled.

As for critics who look at Smithton and point to the “lying signs and wonders” foretold in II Thessalonians, Gray believes they have their timetables mixed up. If these are false wonders, he said, the Rapture has occurred already. “If we’ve missed the Rapture, we have got bigger worries than that.”

People from nearly all denominations have come to Smithton, Gray noted. “There is a group within them whose hearts are crying out for more.”

A large part of the church’s ministry is to Christian believers who haven’t gotten the help they need in their churches.

Gail Collins, who was raised a Southern Baptist, started attending the Smithton church 10 years ago. She remembers well the day in 1996 when revival broke out.

“When the power of God came in, I got set free from a lot of those things I couldn’t change,” Collins said. She said her love for the Lord deepened. “He enlarged my heart and gave me a strong desire to be a complete servant.”

The power of the Holy Spirit is not new, Gray said, but: "It's been lost. We're regaining what was lost through tradition, wrong ideas, wrong thinking. That's why it's available, because it was never supposed to go."

Worship services in churches often represent what happened to someone long ago, he noted. It was fresh then; it's stale now.

Just as the beaten man in the story of the Good Samaritan did not get help from the Levite or the priest, Gray said, people today are not getting help from churches.

"They're being told they are found, but they can't find God. So they come here to this unlikely place that doesn't fit the story."

Gray said any church can be energized by the Holy Spirit. "God is not going to withhold. Jesus is not going to withhold. It's only limited by our own restrictions. That's why I preach, 'Open our hearts and give God a chance.'"

He challenged churches to ask, "Are we going to go with God or stick with our tradition?"

Gray emphasized that the staff of the Smithton church all have come from within the congregation. The are ordinary people, he said, whom God is using in an extraordinary way.

Dwain Carter, pastor of First Baptist Church in Leeton, Mo., has attended a service in the Smithton church. He said the worship, the music and the sermon were excellent, but he voiced concerns about the ending prayer time, when people fall back -- "slain in the Spirit."

Carter said he has searched the Scriptures and has found no backing for the practice. "The Bible says when you encounter God, you fall on your face."

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'Charismatic' label often used in variety of ways, experts say

By Stacey Hamby

(ABP) -- The word "charismatic" has different connotations. It can simply mean expressive. For some, however, it represents a particular system of beliefs.

The word is derived from the word "charis" in the New Testament's original Greek, which is translated into English as "grace." Webster's Dictionary defines "charism" as "a special divine or spiritual gift."

In a literal sense, the term charismatic would therefore apply to the use of "grace gifts" or spiritual gifts.

"The word 'charismatic' is a big umbrella term, and many people fall under it -- from the most wacky Pentecostal you can think of to a totally traditional Baptist who believes in the gifts of the Spirit," explained Todd Hunter, director of the Association of Vineyard Churches, USA.

John Wimber established the first Vineyard church in 1977 in Anaheim, Calif. Today, with about 900 churches in 49 countries, the Vineyard is one of the largest organized charismatic groups.

"Charismatics are people who believe in and practice the gifts of the Spirit and who have rather expressive modes of worship," Hunter said.

"Almost, charismatic is in the eyes of the beholder," he said. "Even Vineyards get criticized these days for not being charismatic enough. It's such a fluid word."

Baptists and others frequently confuse charismatics and Pentecostals.

While there are similarities between the groups, there are also key differences.

The beginning of the American Pentecostal movement is usually traced to a 1901 revival at Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kan. A woman began speaking in a language not known to her (a practice referred to as “speaking in tongues”), and the school’s leader, Charles Parham, identified the act as the evidence of “baptism” in the Holy Spirit.

The doctrine of a “second blessing” subsequent to salvation and evidenced by speaking in tongues -- remains key to Pentecostal doctrine today.

A preacher named William Seymour heard Parham’s teaching at a revival in Texas a few years later. Seymour became a believer in the doctrine of Spirit baptism, and in 1906 began preaching it at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles.

The resulting Azusa Street Revival continued until 1909, with thousands of people visiting the mission from around the world. Visitors flocked to participate in the “outpouring of the Holy Spirit,” much as they go today to Smithton Community Church near Sedalia, Mo., or Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Fla.

In many cases, Azusa Street visitors who received the baptism of the Spirit returned home only to find their churches no longer welcomed them. Thus, the so-called “Pentecostals” -- a name derived from their belief that the Holy Spirit’s outpouring on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 is available to all believers for all time -- began to form their own churches and, eventually, their own denominations.

One such group, the Memphis, Tenn.-based Church of God in Christ, is the fifth-largest Christian denomination in the United States, with 5.5 million members.

It was not until 1959 that what became known as the “charismatic renewal” began.

Episcopal rector Dennis Bennett of Van Nuys, Calif., reported being baptized in the Spirit and speaking in tongues. Some church members opposed him, and he resigned.

In 1960, Bennett became vicar of an Episcopal congregation in Seattle. From there, teaching about the baptism with the Holy Spirit began its spread into mainline denominations, both Protestant and Catholic.

That distinction remains one of the main differences between charismatics and Pentecostals, said Ken Keathley, visiting professor of theology and philosophy at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

“Charismatics remained within their denominations, but Pentecostals are more separatist,” he said. “But both hold to a subsequent experience (to salvation) of being baptized in the Holy Spirit.”

Now, what has been dubbed the “Third Wave” of spiritual renewal is underway. Begun about 20 years ago, it is similar to the charismatic movement. One defining characteristic of this movement, however, is that adherents generally believe the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs at the time of salvation rather than as a second blessing.

Both Pentecostals and charismatics teach that there is a second encounter with the Holy Spirit that occurs at some point after the salvation experience. They call it “baptism in the Holy Spirit.” While the groups share that belief, each approaches it differently.

Pentecostals traditionally believe the initial physical evidence of the Spirit baptism is speaking in tongues. Charismatics don’t necessarily share that view.

Zenas Bicket, chairman of the doctrinal-purity committee for the Assemblies of God, a Pentecostal group based Springfield, Mo., explained: “The Spirit dwells in us at salvation. We don’t say that you don’t have the Spirit until you speak in tongues. The challenge both after salvation and after the baptism in the Holy Spirit is to seek for more of God and to stay filled with the Spirit.”

But, Bicket said, if a Christian has been baptized by the Spirit, the results should show in how the person lives his or her life. “Gifts of the Spirit can operate through people who have not been baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoken in tongues, but I think the gifts are more evident and dynamic if one has have been baptized in the Spirit.”

James Leo Garrett, a retired theology professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, said Baptists always have differed from Pentecostals on this teaching. "There can be gifts, such as speaking in tongues and healing, but there doesn't have to be a second baptism," he said.

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Theologians cite differences between Baptists, charismatics

By Stacey Hamby

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (ABP) -- Spiritual gifts listed in Scripture are often divided into two categories: "ordinary" and "extraordinary." Ordinary gifts include teaching, preaching and evangelism. Extraordinary gifts include speaking in tongues, healing, and miracles.

The use of the extraordinary gifts lies at the heart of differences between traditional Baptists and Pentecostal and charismatics.

Ken Keathley, visiting professor of theology and philosophy at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., said the crux of the matter boils down to one question: is the biblical office of apostle still open today?

"The signs, wonders and miracles are something reserved for the apostles, particularly," Keathley said. "A person had to be personally sent out by Jesus Christ; they had to see the resurrected Lord; Paul qualified because he met the resurrected Lord."

"The office of apostle is closed now," Keathley maintained. "Baptists and serious charismatics agree that the office of apostle is closed. But charismatics believe signs and wonders and gifts go on today."

James Leo Garrett, a retired theology professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, said nobody denies that the ordinary gifts have remained in use since the first century.

"Before the rise of Pentecostalism, Baptists didn't pay any serious attention to the extraordinary gifts, because nobody was talking about it or doing anything with them," Garrett said. He pointed out that there is no official statement of Baptist beliefs on all of the spiritual gifts.

Keathley said Baptists agree that God moves miraculously today -- but only in response to prayer. He gave two reasons Baptists traditionally don't believe miraculous signs are available today:

1. The Bible associates these gifts with the apostles and prophets (those who have direct revelation from the Lord that is infallible).

2. Historical perspective. "It's a matter of fact that when the apostles left the scene, so did the gifts," Keathley said.

Siegfried Schatzmann, a former Swiss Pentecostal minister who now is Baptist and teaches at Southwestern Seminary as a guest professor, offers a different perspective on how Baptists view spiritual gifts.

"I believe what Paul is saying (in I Cor. 13:9-12) is that those gifts are given for the age of the church -- and not just for the first century. They will effectively come to an end when Jesus returns."

Schatzmann believes that many Baptists would affirm that extraordinary spiritual gifts are for today. "But where I think the breakdown comes in for many is: how do we control those extraordinary gifts in a local church context without having to feel this is getting out of hand?"

"The expressed answer is 'We don't know,'" Schatzmann said. "So, to alleviate the situation, we simply don't emphasize it The view that gifts are for today is to acknowledge that God has given the local church a diversity of gifts and abilities to do the work of the Kingdom."

Keathley added that it's important to remember this: "The Christian faith is not irrational. We are to love God with all our heart, souls and minds. The idea that irrationality is more spiritual is wrong.

"We don't want to quench the work of God in our midst, and yet we need discernment when seeing these sorts of practices today."

One practice that most Baptists have little understanding of is being "slain in the Spirit."

Being "slain in the Spirit" is different from "baptism in the Spirit."

"Being slain in the Spirit can happen hundreds of times, but the baptism happens only once," said Todd Hunter, director of the Association of Vineyard Churches, USA.

The "Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements" says the phrase "slain in the Spirit" is a modern expression "denoting a religious phenomenon in which an individual falls down; the cause of this is attributed to the Holy Spirit."

While the terminology may be modern, the experience of being slain in the Spirit has been noted in history, including American frontier revivals in the 1800s. Besides falling down, characteristics of being "slain in the Spirit" can include a loss of feeling or control, speaking in tongues, laughing, weeping or praising God. And, although there are some biblical references to people whom had "fallen down," the Dictionary concludes that biblical evidence for this phenomenon is inconclusive.

"The term is controversial because it's not a biblical term," Hunter acknowledged. "It just happens."

Zenas Bicket, chairman of the doctrinal-purity committee for the Assemblies of God, emphasized that being "slain in the Spirit" is not a mark of spirituality. "I've heard of people being slain in the Spirit and even lying there for hours, and when they got up, things were changed in their lives But falling down for the sake of going down or to brag about it -- like 'I went down three times' -- is not right. It should be the Spirit moving, not the human."

John Brown, a former Baptist minister who now is pastor of a Vineyard church in Kansas City, described being slain in the Spirit this way: "It's like sticking your finger in a light socket. You come in touch with the power, and it sweeps people off their feet."

Both Keathley and Garrett said the charismatic movement -- and especially the Third Wave in the past 20 years -- has had some positive influence on Baptists.

"If Baptists refuse to give a place to the Holy Spirit in life and worship, then we are wrong," Garrett said. "In all of the denominations, there has been a neglect of the Spirit -- this was true of the Catholic Church and true of the Reformation.

"But to say we have neglected the Holy Spirit is not to say that we make the teaching of the baptism in or with the Spirit absolutely true as given by Pentecostals."

Keathley said the charismatic movement's two most positive influences in Baptist churches have been an increased emphasis on intimacy with God and the immediacy of God's work in our midst.

"People are hungry for it," Keathley said. "Typically, Baptists have failed in this area. Baptist churches are often spectator-oriented and not participant-oriented. We sing about God instead of to God. That intimacy is a needed corrective."

When Baptists think of charismatics, they often think of a worship style, including contemporary or "praise" music. Garrett pointed out that just because a piece of music was composed after 1970 doesn't mean it is "charismatic."

Keathley agreed that a contemporary style of worship does not mean a church is charismatic.

"It is possible for Baptists to have a blended worship of having contemporary worship styles while maintaining our heritage," he said. "It's not necessary to incorporate the theological baggage of the Vineyard movement in order to have relevant worship for the 21st century."

Of course, Hunter rejects the notion that the Vineyard has "theological baggage."

“Our self-perception is ‘empowered evangelicals,’” he said. “I often say the best Christians in the world are charismatic Baptists. Baptists have the passion for Scripture and the lost and then add to that the power of the Spirit, and that seems to me to be the winning formula.”

“That's our dream, an empowered evangelical,” Hunter continued. “We want to have the best of evangelical theology and the best of Pentecostal practice.”

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